

The Rhetorical Impact of Polylingualism Employed by Lithuanian Politicians on Facebook

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Abstract. The aim of the research presented in this article aims to determine the impact of polylingualism on the effectiveness of political rhetoric in Lithuania. The study focuses on elements borrowed from other languages and used by Lithuanian politicians in their Facebook posts. In addition, the motivation behind such use is explored, aiming to establish whether polylingualism is part of a conscious effort of political communication in order to build a positive image. Within the scope of this research are Facebook posts containing cases of polylingualism, specifically, English-language inserts. The authors of these posts are prominent politicians who are native Lithuanian speakers engaged in active communication on social media. Collected during the period of 2018–2021, the research material was examined using the method of rhetorical discourse analysis, resulting in the identification of characteristic instruments of persuasion, i.e. the tools which help enhance the effectiveness of certain discourse. The researchers aimed to determine the general patterns and dominant tendencies of mixed speech within the political discourse on social media. The research reveals the use of polylingualism as a stylistic tool imitating informal speaking and creating contextual discourse.

Keywords: mixed speech; polylingualism; English inserts; rhetoric; political discourse; Lithuanian.

Introduction

Previous studies of mixed speech used in various types of discourse have concluded that such language is linked to impactful speaking and successful communication. As

the linguistic repertoire of the population expands, “mixed speech becomes an additional opportunity for its users to create social meanings, i.e. to construct favourable social styles, images or identities across different areas of activity” (Pinkevičienė, 2017, p. 74).

The use of mixed language in a Lithuanian-speaking environment has already attracted much attention from local scholars. Previous research includes a study of social meanings created by mixed speech in the language of Lithuania’s urban youth (Čekuolytė, 2012; Vyšniauskienė, 2012, 2014); an analysis of how adults use mixed speech in a work environment (Pinkevičienė, 2017); as well as the use of English in public discourse – in the media (Nevinskaitė, 2009), in public signs (Vaicekauskienė, 2010; Kniūkšta, 2006), and advertisements (Vaicekauskienė 2009, Vaicekauskienė, Šmitaitė 2010).

The aim of the present research is to determine the use of polylingualism and its effect on FB posts by Lithuanian politicians. The study focuses on the following questions: (1) what elements borrowed from other languages are used by Lithuanian politicians in their Facebook (FB) posts?; (2) what is the intention of using mixed speech in the communication process?; (3) what kind of identity is the addresser constructing by using mixed speech, i.e. how does polylingualism help politicians position themselves and persuade their addressees?

The use of mixed speech on FB has previously been discussed in the article “Code-switching on Facebook in Denmark and Lithuania” by E. Jakelienė (2018) and the publication “Russian and English as socially meaningful resources for mixed speech styles of Lithuanians” by L. Vaicekauskienė (2010) and I. Vyšniauskienė (2019). Both of the above examined the use of mixed language from a sociolinguistic perspective, confirming that foreign-language inserts were being used on social media as an identity-building tool. However, no targeted research on polylingualism as an element of political rhetoric and communication used by Lithuanian politicians on social networks has been conducted prior to this study.

The empirical research material consists of multiple FB posts during the period of 2018–2021, which contained cases of polylingualism. The authors of these posts are native Lithuanian speakers engaged in politics and actively participating in social media communication: members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, members of the European Parliament, and members of municipal councils. Messages posted on FB by bilingual politicians (to whom Lithuanian is not their mother tongue) were not included in the scope of this study.

The research material was examined using the method of rhetorical discourse analysis, resulting in the identification of characteristic instruments of persuasion, i.e. the tools which help enhance the effectiveness of certain discourse. The rhetorical perspective is used to discuss the effectiveness and the impact of mixed speech on a certain discourse. As political media discourse is predominantly contextual, its perception is inseparable from critical discourse analysis (CDA), enabling the “analysis of forms and mechanisms of communication and verbal interaction” (Telešienė, 2005, p. 3). In this case, the rhetorical analysis of discourse may be seen as an integral part of the critical analysis of discourse, which examines real-life cases of social interaction in authentic and

effective discourses broadcast by the media. It aims to study the influence mechanisms of discourse, described by R. Wodak visually as the demystification of the power of persuasion (Wodak, 2015, p. 3).

The research on polylingualism as a deliberate instrument of persuasion in political rhetoric does not focus on its statistical characteristics or any detailed analysis of individual cases. The authors of the present study aim to identify the general patterns of polylingualism – the main rhetorical topics and dominant tendencies of mixed language used in Lithuania’s political discourse on social media. The rhetorical study of discourse included the following stages: a) a number of typical examples of mixed speech use were identified during the exploratory analysis; b) cases of polylingualism were assigned to the appropriate rhetorical category according to the criteria of frequency and recurrence of use; c) each category was examined in more detail, i.e. a rhetorical content analysis was carried out.

1. Theoretical assumptions

The study of mixed speech is inextricably linked to the sociolinguistic analysis of discourse. The sociolinguistics of mobile language resources focuses on dynamic and topical linguistic repertoire and provides the terminology for foreign-language resources entering the repertoire of the original language. Various terms can be found in sociolinguistic literature to describe the mixing of multilingual resources: mixed speech, hybrid speech, mixed style, code-switching, mixed code, mixed discourse, polylingualism, metrolingualism, etc. Discussing this diverse range of terminology, linguist Jannis Androutsopoulos observes: “Their differences put aside, concepts such as polylingualism, metrolingualism and translanguaging signal a shift of focus from linguistic systems to multilingual speakers and practices; a critical view of ‘language’ as an ideological construct; and a move towards theorising ‘fluid’ and ‘flexible’ relations between language, ethnicity and place as well as between linguistic practice and the ownership of language” (Androutsopoulos, 2015, pp. 185–186).

The terms used in the present article are “mixed speech” (a way of speaking when resources from other language(s) are inserted into the main language) and “polylingualism” (an element of another language inserted into the main language). The latter term is applied to words in English, Russian or other languages (original inserts as well as non-standard loanwords), word parts and text fragments.

The concepts of polylinguism and polylingualism have been chosen because they relate “to a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to multilingualism without drawing clear boundaries between the individual ‘languages’. Speakers see the ‘features’ of different languages rather than moving from one linguistic system to another. All linguistic resources available to the speaker may be used to achieve the speaker’s communication objectives ... Such use is conscious, the speaker understands that it can cause a certain effect, and uses it, sometimes even intentionally violating the rules of socially acceptable verbal behaviour in conversation” (Pinkevičienė, 2017, pp. 77–78).

In addition, according to the theory of polylinguism, the use of polylingualism implies the playfulness of discourse and is linked to the creative decisions and communicative intentions of its author. Such use of foreign language resources does not require (sufficient) knowledge of that foreign language, i.e. the speaker may know only a few words of that language and still manage to create playful hybrid combinations (cf. Jørgensen et al., 2011, pp. 23–38). The concept of polylingualism is therefore closely linked to the rhetorical analysis of discourse, the aim of which is to investigate the motivation for such use and the impact on the effectiveness of the discourse.

Most research into the use of mixed speech online usually begins with the explanation of the metaphor “networked multilingualism”: “In research on social network sites, the network metaphor refers to new spheres of online sociability that host social practices of self-presentation and reflexive construction of identity” (Androutopoulos, 2015, p. 188). However, it is important to remember that networked multilingualism is restricted by certain conditions: it is a written language published in digital form; it is disseminated through social networks; and it is addressed to the users of these networks. Social media communication is closely linked to rhetorical impact: “For many people the Internet has become a translocal linguistic contact zone in which multilingual resources and repertoires can turn out to be crucial capital for successful communication, action, and interaction” (Leppänen, 2012, p. 388).

2. The rhetoric of social networks

Research on digital rhetoric not only explores persuasion in its traditional sense but focuses on the formation of both individual and collective identities, as well as new relationship constructs (Zappen, 2005, p. 322). The development and reach of information technologies have had a significant impact on political rhetoric, affecting both its form and content. Some argue that modern information technologies may have facilitated the return to direct democracy and that the easily-accessible virtual space can provide ideal conditions for democracy to flourish (Šuminas, 2009) as more citizens are becoming directly involved in political communication. Social networks not only ensure a direct flow of information from politicians, but can also create opportunities for direct dialogue with voters. This medium is true political publicity, a communication space built through the participation and public declaration of interests by many people; it is a medium where using various rhetorical tools, anyone can engage in free, conscious, and public discussions around important issues and where real-life politics flourish (Mažeikis, 2015, pp. 13–14).

Analysis of political rhetoric focuses on the process of political communication, the interaction between various elements, the potential impact, and many other aspects. However, it is important to emphasise that language is the foundation of any political communication. Politics cannot be conducted without speaking: from the moment a politician emerges, through to their speeches being reproduced in media and, of course, the end of their political existence, the moment they fall silent (Bielinis, 2005, p. 9). Political

rhetoric employs language as a tool to create persuasive common sense (Charteris-Black, 2006). It is a two-sided phenomenon: speaking and discourse help form a political identity, which is then reinforced through discourse.

Murray Edelman maintains that political communication is a linguistic game that creates meanings and alternative realities desired by its authors (Edelman, 2002, pp. 110–111). In other words, an individual perceives political reality and participates in it not through specific political events but through the language describing them and creating new meanings. W. Parsons similarly argues that society perceives politics through political rhetoric, i.e., the targeted interpretation of this rhetoric by its creators reaches society, and the actual public policies are only a reflection of effective words and ineffective politics (Parsons, 2001, p. 172).

The rhetorical function of mixed speech (code-switching) is also mentioned in the works of J. Holmes (2000), A. Nerghes (2011), and A. Eldin (2014). These researchers all agree that the rhetorical goal of using mixed speech is to attract attention and persuade the audience: “<...> code-switching will draw the participant’s attention and will enhance their motivation to carefully scrutinize the message presented”; thus “it is concluded that code-switching is an effective strategy that leads to systematic processing of information especially when associated with strong arguments” (Nerghes, 2011, p. 4, 17).

Social media communication is part of a politician’s image. This particular space and the target audience a political figure is trying to engage with determining the ways of reaching the addressee. This often means employing a familiar tone and choosing certain linguistic tools not normally used when speaking publicly or in an official capacity. The basic principle of rhetorical propriety (*decorum*) is intuitively followed: the medium dictates the style and the verbal expression, which acts as a reasoning element (Heiss et al., 2019, p. 1501). In other words, language is used strategically to rationalise political activity and mobilise support for political ambitions (Edelman, 2002, p. 115). Therefore, an assumption can be made that political rhetoric on social media functions as a linguistic system of goals and intentions.

3. English-language inserts

More than 200 FB posts containing cases of polylingualism were identified during the study, including examples of several inserts (sometimes in different languages) within the same message. Inserts from as many as 12 languages were identified by the researchers: 116 English, 52 Russian (including cases of Russian slang), 6 Belarusian, 6 Latin, 6 Polish, 4 Icelandic, 3 French, 2 Ukrainian, 2 Spanish, 1 Greek, 1 German, and 1 Italian¹. This article focuses on the most substantial category – English-language inserts.

The English inserts identified during the study can be subdivided into three further groups according to their size: (1) single words, (2) phrases, and (3) hashtags. Single

¹ All FB posts were collected during the period of 2018–2021. This social network is a communication space which reflects the most ‘topical’ and ‘burning’ issues of the present. It is therefore estimated that the number of foreign-language inserts in FB posts will be different after 24 February 2022.

English words tend to retain their original spelling (see example 1.1). However, cases of spelling adaptation have also been observed (see examples 1.2.1–1.2.4).

1.1

Vienas iš geresnių <i>review</i> (M. M. 2020 12 12); Ar pastebėjote, kokių <i>buzzword</i> tapo žodis #higi- ena (I. P. 2021 02 17);	One of the better <i>reviews</i> (M. M. 12/12/2020); Have you noticed that the word #hygiene has become a <i>buzzword</i> (I. P. 17/02/2021);
<i>Super</i> rimtu veidu apie rimtus dalykus (A. M. 2021 01 19);	A <i>super</i> serious face to talk about serious things (A. M. 19/01/2021);
<i>godspeed</i> Aušrinė ir jos komandai! (V. M. 2021 01 20).	<i>godspeed</i> Aušrinė and her team! (V. M. 20/01/2021).

Morphologically-adapted English inserts are less common. These are cases where a Lithuanian ending is added after an apostrophe to a word which has not been orthographically adapted (see example 1.2.1); cases where a Lithuanian ending is added to a word which has not been orthographically adapted, but no apostrophe is used (see example 1.2.2); cases where both a prefix and an ending are added before/after the apostrophe to a word which has not been orthographically adapted (see example 1.2.3); or cases where orthographically-adapted words are used (see example 1.2.4).

1.2.1

Europos Sąjunga ta proga sureagouoja greitai ir siekia Europos žmonių interesų nepaisant pami- nėtų <i>timing</i> 'o kliūčių. (M. M. 2020 12 30).	On that occasion, the European Union reacts quickly and serves the interests of the European people despite the mentioned challenges of <i>timing</i> . (M. M. 30/12/2020).
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1.2.2

Savivaldybėje praleidau penkerius su puse metų. <i>Millennialsų</i> terminais – amžinybę. (I. P. 2020 11 10).	I have spent five and a half years in the municipality. An eternity in <i>millennial</i> terms. (I. P. 10/11/2020).
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1.2.3

Bičiuliai, kviečiu visus užėiti ir <i>pa'like'inti</i> mano page'ą – Kristijonas Bartoševičius. (K. B. 2020 12 10).	Friends, come and <i>like</i> my page – Kristijonas Bartoševičius. (K. B. 10/12/2020).
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1.2.4.

Verslo įmonė „ <i>feilina</i> “ daryti tai, ką reikalauja įstatymas – apsaugoti surinktus asmens duome- nis. (G. P. 2021 02 17).	This company is <i>failing</i> to do what is required by law – to protect the personal data they have collected. (G. P. 17/02/2021).
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Entire English phrases are also commonly used in FB posts and can be divided into the following groups: general phrases (see example 2.1); associative idiomatic expressions (see example 2.2); exact quotations, often in quotation marks, sometimes even mentioning their source (see example 2.3); orthographically-adapted phrases (see example 2.4).

2.1

In the other news, Ramūnas Karbauskis atsisakė mandato ir tai liks tik jo ir jo santykių su savo rinkėjais klausimu. (V. M. 2020 11 24).

Nacionalinio naratyvo kūryba *in a nutshell*. (G. L. 2021 02 19).

Tikimės sveiko proto Seime ir visų racionalių, mokslo argumentus suprantančių frakcijų palaikymo. *Fingers crossed* (I. P. 2020 12 21).

In the other news, Ramūnas Karbauskis gave up his mandate and it will only stay between him and his voters (V. M. 24/11/2020).

Creation of a national narrative *in a nutshell*. (G. L. 19/02/2021).

We are hoping for common sense in the Seimas and the support of all rational political groups which understand the arguments of science. *Fingers crossed* (I. P. 21/12/2020).

2.2

Play silly games – win stupid prizes. Aišku, koneveikti LGBT – labai parankus, lengvas ir daug fantazijos nereikalaujantis PR’as, bet kaip greitai viskas pasikeičia, kai dėl to dar ir reikia susimokėti (A. V. 2021 03 11);

Vladimiras Putinas pavedė išnagrinėti klausimą dėl Rusijos žmogaus teisių teismo sukūrimo. *Some jokes just write themselves*. (M. A. 2021 02 02);

Tebesitėsia ‘*May you live in interesting times*’ uzkalbėjimas. (I. P. 2021 01 07).

Play silly games – win stupid prizes. Of course, hurling abuse at LGBT is a very convenient, easy, and unimaginative type of PR, but how quickly everything changes when you have to pay for it (A. V. 11/03/2021).

Vladimir Putin ordered an inquiry into the establishment of the Russian Court of Human Rights. *Some jokes just write themselves*. (M. A. 02/02/2021).

The curse ‘*May you live in interesting times*’ continues. (I. P. 07/01/2021).

2.3

Vienas iš Peterhouse dėstytojų, John Adamson, atėjęs į katalikų kapelioniją ir pamatęs ant sienos kabantį portretą, pakomentavo: “*He can’t have been at Peterhouse, or he wouldn’t have been stabbed in front.*” (M. A. 2021 03 29);

“*Someone might get killed. Please mr. President, condemn it.*” – girdžiu tiesiogiai. (M. M. 2021 01 06);

Ir niekad niekad tegul nepasimiršta pamatinės vertybės – žmogaus teisės ir privati nuosavybė: “*If history could teach us anything, it would be that private property is inextricably linked with civilization.*” Ludwig von Mises (I. P. 2020 12 11).

One of the professors at Peterhouse, John Adamson, when visiting the Catholic chaplaincy and noticing a portrait hanging on the wall, commented: ‘*He can’t have been at Peterhouse, or he wouldn’t have been stabbed in front.*’ (M. A. 29/03/2021).

‘*Someone might get killed. Please Mr. President, condemn it*’, I hear it directly. (M. M. 06/01/2021).

And let us never forget the fundamental values of human rights and private property: ‘*If history could teach us anything, it would be that private property is inextricably linked with civilization.*’ Ludwig von Mises (I. P. 11/12/2020).

2.4

Sač mač lyderšip. Toxic leadership. (I. Š. 2020 03 22);

Rimtai, žmonės, nu *lets kamon*. (A. V. 2020 12 16).

Sač mač lyderšip (so much leadership). Toxic leadership. (I. Š. 22/02/2020).

Seriously, people, *lets kamon* (let’s c’mon) (A. V. 16/12/2020).

One of the more interesting cases of orthographic adaptation is a quote taken from the movie *The Terminator* (1984, USA) and written in the Cyrillic alphabet:

2.5

Geresniam įgarsinimo efektui galėjo susirasti tą dėdę, kuris mano paauglystėje vakarietiškus filmus su bulve burnoj rusiškai įgarsindavo. *Айл би бэж.* (I. Š. 2020 09 04).

For a better sound effect they could have brought in the guy who in my teenage years used to dub Western movies in Russian with a potato in his mouth. *Айл би бэж. (I'll be back)* (I. Š. 04/09/2020).

4. The rhetorical impact of English-language inserts

English is the predominant language in FB posts and reflects a generational change. An increasing number of young Lithuanians – educated in the post-soviet system, fluent in English and confidently functioning in a global environment – are entering politics. The choice of social media as the means of communication is also linked to the use of English-language inserts, as the terminology of the Internet, social network interaction, its methods and tools make up a sizeable semantic group of polylingual cases (Vaicekauskienė, 2013, p. 19). These inserts are usually adapted (see example 1.2) by adding Lithuanian morphemes or applying the rules of Lithuanian phonetics, which indicates their incorporation into the Lithuanian language system or that one, two or more systems² are being used concurrently.

Some of the unmodified inserts are used for conative effect, i.e. the addresser believes that its translation would “delete” the implied meaning, reduce the desired effect and that the link with the cultural field this word functions in would be lost. Studies on multilingualism in social media show that such code-switching is the norm rather than the exception (cf. Volkova et al., 2018, p. 609).

The use of quotations is also functionally diverse. A quotation is the most easily identifiable form of intertextuality, revealing the addresser’s education, cultural aspirations and involvement, as well as showing how active this individual is in a specific cultural field. Traditionally, quoting is chosen as an argument from the topic of authority, supporting the *speaker’s ethos*. It is, therefore, important that the addresser and the addressee have identical perceptions of authority. Separated by quotation marks or written in a different font, a quote is often preceded by certain introductory lexemes and references to its author. An exact quote in a foreign language demonstrates the addresser’s linguistic competency and builds a perception of the politician as someone who is potentially able to communicate directly within a multicultural environment. However, very few cases of

² This could be considered a modern *macaronic* language. Macaronic language is a medieval phenomenon when a text combines elements or unmodified morphemes from different languages. Historically, a vernacular would be mixed with the *lingua Franca* – Latin (Lexico, 2022). The so-called macaronic poetry emerged in the late 15th century, characterised by elements of humour, burlesque, satire, or undermining. Stemming from an unexpected contrast, this type of discourse eventually came to be used as a figure of speech. Modern use of macaronic language is especially prevalent among young people in non-English speaking countries who often use faux-English, inserting specific phrases into their mother tongue (cf. Shapiro, 2014).

such quoting were found during the study. They all reflected the educational background and position publicly declared by the politician, as well as their motivation for using a certain quotation (see example 2.3).

Quotes of particular relevance are used without referencing them. Some are well known in global political discourse or pop culture. E.g.: “This is a real sigh of relief. *Make democracy great again!*” (M. M. 20/01/2021) alludes to the famous “Make America Great Again” slogan made popular by Donald Trump in his successful 2016 presidential campaign. American President Ronald Reagan used a similar slogan – “Let’s Make America Great Again” – in his successful 1980 presidential campaign. It has since become a permanent feature in American pop culture, entertainment and politics. Similar cases include “Photo – Saulius Žiūra, *the one and only*” (I. P. 25/02/2021), a reference to Chesney Hawkes’ 90’s hit single, and “One member of the Seimas (*Who Must Not Be Named or You-Know-Who*) to the candidate...” (I. P. 17/02/2021), “You-Know-Who” and “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named” being alternative names of Lord Voldemort, the most powerful and dangerous Dark Wizard of all time in the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling.

Some posts include certain well-known idioms considered untranslatable, e.g.: “The curse *May you live in interesting times* continues. *Give it up, Trump!*” (I. P. 07/01/2021); “We are hoping for common sense in the Seimas and the support of all rational political groups which understand the arguments of science. *Fingers crossed*” (I. P. 21/12/2020); “*It’s official!* Joe Biden – the 46th President of the USA!” (I. P. 07/11/2020); “*Play silly games – win stupid prizes.*” (A. V. 11/04/2021); “*Prior engagements ought to be honoured.*” (M. A. 10/02/2021); “Vladimir Putin ordered an inquiry into the establishment of the Russian Court of Human Rights. *Some jokes just write themselves.*” (M. A. 02/02/2021); “Creation of a national narrative *in a nutshell.*” (G. L. 19/02/2021); “What’s next? France withdraws from the Paris Agreement on climate change, Austria stops complying with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations? *Mind boggles.*” (M. A. 20/03/2021).

Quoting can also perform a meta-linguistic function, reflecting the polyphony of the text when other voices are employed to express an idea: “*Someone might get killed. Please Mr. President, condemn it. – I hear it directly.*” (M. M. 06/01/2021). The author of this comment reinforces the illusion of multiple voices with a phrase ending the quote (underlined by authors). This type of citation often includes phrases rewritten in Lithuanian characters (see example 2.4) or even Cyrillic (see example 2.5), with a strong hint of irony. For example, the quote “*Айл бу бэк*” (*I’ll be back*) from the movie *The Terminator* sounds satirical as many of the addressees of this post who are of similar age to its author would have seen this film dubbed in Russian. Dubbing was usually done in a certain voice, and this is what is being referred to and mocked here by the person posting the phrase.

Modification of quotes should be mentioned as another process often linked to the content of FB posts. It creates a combination of texts with and without authorship, which not only shows the intellect and wit of the addresser but is also dependent on the addressee’s background knowledge in order to read it: “I congratulate my friend Žygis on starting a new era of solidarity between democracies, the fact that instead of *America – first, Lithuania – first, Germany – first*, there will be *Solidarity and Democracy – first*”

(E. Z. 22/03/2021); “And that’s the epilogue to a 28-year career. Sad. *Hold on, if love is the answer, you’re home.*” (K. B. 22/02/2021); “There is nothing to cry about here if the company is unable to bear the burden of lawsuits. If this one doesn’t make it, another one will emerge, because the service is being used and is needed. *The only bee I trust is the bee in the hive.*”³ (G. P. 17/02/2021); “I suspect the belief that if you *fake* it long enough, you will win anyway, helps here. *Fake it till you make it*” (I. Š. 17/12/2019); “The resignation of Paluckas (*just a bd luck!*) does not change anything.” (A. M. 22/01/2021).

Hashtags deserve a separate mention. English keywords often follow the text in Lithuanian to express special emphasis: #*makedemocracygreatagain*, #*savethetrees*, #*FreeNavalnyNow*, #*StandWithBelarus*, #*StayAtHome*, #*loveyjob*, #*funfunfun*. Hashtags tend to be typed out in Latin characters, with the text itself usually performing the function of referencing or content. A politician’s post, which includes a hashtag, is more likely to be seen by a certain audience, helping the addresser strengthen his/her authority in a particular group and appear engaged and community-focused. Many of the foreign-language hashtags identified during the study illustrate current political, public, and social movements, at the same time implying the *ethos* of the addresser as an active agent. However, the use of hashtags often reflects a simulated involvement, chasing popular opinions and propaganda bandwagon techniques rather than actual engagement.

Conclusion

1. Cases of mixed language use in the FB posts of Lithuanian politicians are not very common. Polylingualism is usually employed either to express political views or as an element of (supposedly) familiar everyday speech. English-language inserts, English words and phrases dominate the examples identified during the study. This is most likely due to the politicians’ improving English language skills and their orientation toward the relevant audience, which is fluent in English. English phrases do not tend to be orthographically adapted; however, when individual English words are inserted into the post, Lithuanian endings are often added to the original form, and the spelling is usually adapted.
2. Some cases of polylingualism are functioning systematically within a discourse, i.e., embedded into the language, often modified. Such adaptation can depend on the various processes, methods, tools or names related to specific social media or the belief that using a Lithuanian equivalent would not achieve the same effect, i.e. the conative impact would be lost. This phenomenon is also partially related to how closely FB posts reflect the everyday, familiar, unofficial communication without any obligation to use the standard language. Similarity to spoken language would also explain why foreign-language inserts are often modified. Polylingualism performs the function of persuasion, primarily through the development of common language, a *sui generis*

³ This is a play on words, as the author is talking about the leaked data from the information system of Lithuanian car sharing company *CityBee*.

jargon, which is easy to understand and has a particular effect on the addressee.

3. Facebook is perceived as a medium for immediate, direct, and familiar communication with the addressee, where the addresser can do away with his/her formal image, creating the illusion of close, human communication, sometimes even an exaggerated “hooligan”, inappropriate version of it, to engage and interact. FB posts serve as a means of broadcasting views and opinions while employing suggestive rhetoric and presenting the content in an emotional voice.

The research reveals that Lithuanian politicians consciously employ polylingualism in their posts as a stylistic tool of expression, which helps imitate a natural, informal way of speaking and creating contextual discourse.

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