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THE USE OF *THEN* IN LITHUANIAN LEARNERS' ENGLISH

In linguistic literature, learner language has been extensively analysed from various perspectives. A number of studies have reported on the differences between non-native and native learner English. The former has been repeatedly characterised as showing the overuse of the features associated with spoken English (Gilquin and Paquot 2007, 2008; Russell 2014; Yoon 2015). Though in linguistic analysis, due to its polyfunctional nature, 'then' has been addressed under a number of various labels, from the quantitative perspective it is reported to be characteristic of spoken English (Biber et al. 1999). The present study, limited to the analysis of non-native language data, aims at determining the roles of language mode and text genre on the use of 'then' in the Lithuanian learners' English. Using quantitative and qualitative approaches three corpora representing the spoken (LINDSEI-LIT) and written (LICLE-VU-LIT and CALE-LIT) English produced by the Lithuanian students were analysed. While the results indicate a direct correlation between language mode and the use of 'then', the role of genre proved to be less unequivocal.

KEY WORDS: learner language, language mode variable, language genre variable.

Introduction

Then has been extensively analysed in linguistic literature under numerous different labels: a discourse marker (Bellés-Fortuño 2016, Biezma 2014, Fraser 1999, Haselow 2011, Schiffrin 1987, Urgelles-Coll 1987), a linking adverbial (Makauskaitė 2016), a time adverb (Yilmaz and Dikilitaş 2017), a time adverbial (Crawford 2008), a temporal adverbial (Makauskaitė 2016, Povolná 1998), a circumastance adverbial (Lenker 2010), a modal particle (Haselow 2011), etc. Since the Old English period, it has been known as polyfunctional. In Old English, *then* ('þa') could have had such diverse functions as a circumstance adverb of time or space, an adverbial connector expressing transition, a discourse marker 'what's more', or a subordinating conjunction indicating a temporal relation (Lenker 2010). Nowadays, for example, Deborah Schiffrin (1987), in her study of discourse markers, distinguishes the functions of *then* in relation to the three temporal concepts, namely, reference, event, and discourse time. According to William J. Crawford (2008), *then* functions as a time adverb and two types of linking adverbials: having the meaning of 'next' and marking results or conclusions. The latter classification serves as the basis for the present study, where the following three functions are distinguished:

Function 1: at that time;
Function 2: in a series, after that, next; and
Function 3: as a result, in that case.

The fact that a great number of studies have treated *then* as belonging to the class of discourse makers, i.e. "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987, p. 31), can explain the spoken language mode having been often chosen for the analysis. Spoken English material of the International Corpus of English was analysed by Alexander Haselow (2011), who focused on utterance-final use of *then*. The comparison of the use of *then* in spoken academic discourse of English and Spanish lectures was studied by Begoña Bellés-Fortuño (2016). The material for the analysis was drawn from the spoken part of the British National Corpus as well as the Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian by Indrė Makauskaitė (2016).

Douglas Biber et al. (1999) indicated sensitivity of *then* to the language mode, high frequencies of it being found in conversations, and to a lesser degree to genre, with fiction containing a relatively higher number of the word under examination than other written genres. A number studies have reported on the differences between non-native and native learner English (Hasselgård 2015, Pérez-Paredes 2010, Rozumko 2015). The previous studies of *then* in learner language have yielded controversial results. While Ercan Yilmaz and Kenan Dikilitaş (2017) reported on several times higher frequencies of *then* in written non-native learner English than in written academic prose by native speakers, Crawford (2008) found the quantitative results of *then* in non-native learners' writing to be closer to academic prose than to conversations. The latter contradicts the tendencies to imploy spoken language features in written interlanguage (Gilquin and Paquot 2007, 2008; Russell 2014; Yoon 2015). As it is shown in Crawford's (2008) study, in learners' English writing, the functional distribution, however, proved to be different from both spoken English as well as academic writing. The present study aims to address the gap of the Lithuanian learners' interlanguage studies with respect to the use of *then*.

Data and methodology

For the analysis of the role of language mode and genre variables in the use of *then* in the Lithuanian learners' English, the data were selected from the following corpora representing written and spoken English produced by the Lithuanian students:

- the Lithuanian subcorpus of the International Corpus of Learner English compiled at Vilnius University (LICLE-VU). It comprises 294 argumentative and literary essays totalling 171,236 word tokens written by the third and fourth year students of English Philology;
- two parts, summaries (CALE-SUM-LIT) and proposals (CALE-PRO-LIT), of the Lithuanian component of the Corpus of Academic Learner English (CALE-LIT). For the analysis 118 proposals and 103 summaries were selected with the total of 69,073 and 36,560 word tokens respectively;

- the Lithuanian component of the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI-LIT). 80 transcripts of the Lithuanian students' of English interviews collected at Vilnius University totalling 84,676 word tokens were analysed in the study.

The research used a mixed research method. Using AntConc3.4.4w (Anthony 2014) software, quantitative analysis was carried out since "observations of frequency have an important place in a description of usage because they display the linguistic choices made by speakers and writers" (Hasselgård 2010, p. 7). The qualitative analysis of the concordance lines allowed the classification of *then* according to its functions. Statistical significance of the results at the 95th percentile, with p<0.05, was established with the help of *Log-likelihood and effect size calculator*.

Results

The analysis of *then* in the Lithuanian learners' language highlights its high dependence on language mode. The learners showed a tendency to imploy *then* significantly more often in spoken interactions than in writing whereas there were no considerable differences in the overall frequency among written text types (Fig. 1).
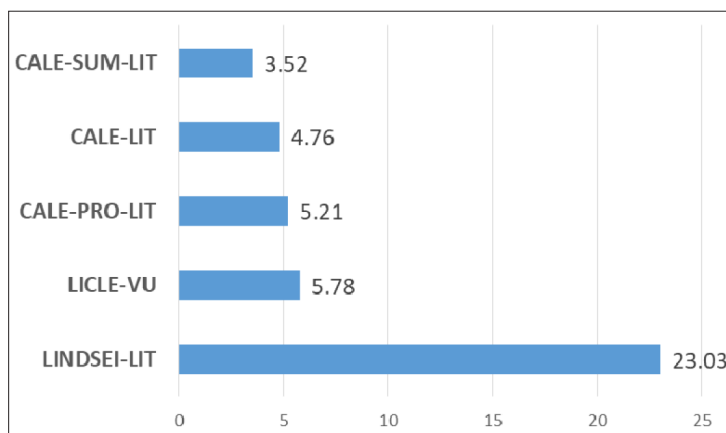

Figure 1. **Normalised frequency of** *then* **in the Lithuanian learners' English corpora per 10,000 words.**

The distribution of *then* throughout the corpora mirrors the frequency data with LINDSEI-LIT and CALE-SUM-LIT at the opposite ends of the scale with eight and 81 percent of the files containing the word under examination respectively (Fig. 2). In written texts, which required the students to express their own ideas, i.e. essays and proposals, *then* was used in approximately one out of four files (23 and 25 percent respectively).

Functional distribution, however, yielded the opposite tendencies (Fig. 3). In spoken language as well as proposals, the students most often used *then* to signal the meaning of 'next'. In essays and summaries, major functional preferences were reverse. More than
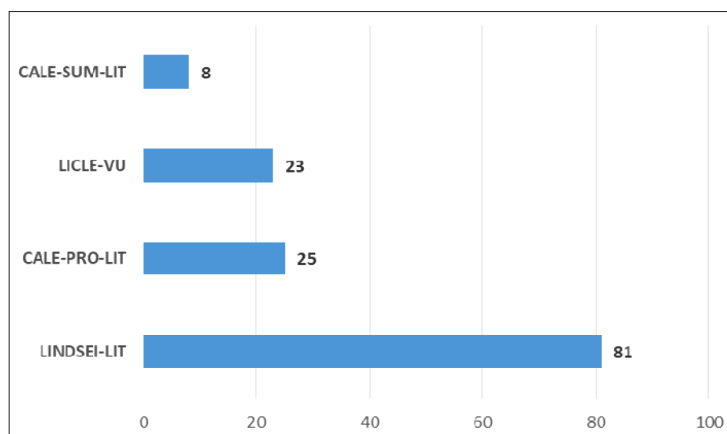
Figure 2. **Distribution of *then* through the Lithuanian learners' English corpora by percentage.**
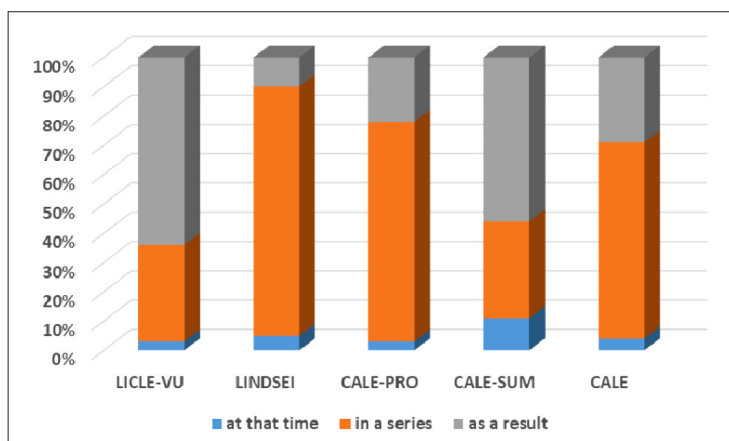

Figure 3. **Functional distribution of *then* in the Lithuanian learners' English corpora by percentage.**

a half of all the cases were used with Function 3 (64 and 53 percent respectively). The tendencies match those observed in the essays of Spanish, Bulgarian and native students, as well as in academic writing by native speakers (Crawford 2008).

Indication of a sequence (Function 2) was found in 33 per cent in both LICLE-VU and CALE-SUM-LIT corpora. Function 1, showing a specific time point was the most seldom used function in all the corpora under consideration. It was, however, relatively more popular in summaries – a genre that due to its requirements is strongly influenced by the original source text to be summarized.

Differences in functional distribution in the subcorpora of CALE-LIT signal the danger of overgeneralization while analising seemingly homogeneous texts, in this case, those belonging to academic register. The results presented in Fig.3 indicate the importance of highlighting the specific genre characteristics and requirement in the teaching process.

Table 1 provides the summary statistics for the functional distribution of *then* between the variables under consideration. '+' indicates a statistically significant while '-' shows a statistically insignificant difference. In brackets, the table presents log-likelihood values. The results illustrate that for Function 1, the use of *then* depends only on language mode. Language mode, however, proved to play an important role for the other two functions as well. Only insignificant differences were observed for all the functions between essays and summaries, while in essays and proposals, the difference in students' quantitative use of *then* with Functions 2 and 3 proved to be significant, which led to a significant difference between overall results of written academic and non-academic texts. The comparison of two academic genres, summaries and proposals, shows differencies in the use of Funcion 2.

Table 1. **Statistical significance between variables according to the functions of *then* (LL value) in the Lithuanian learners' English corpora.**

	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
spoken vs. written (LINDSEI vs. LICLE-VU)	+ (8.82)	+ (216.78)	+ (3.88)
written non-academic vs. written academic (LICLE-VU vs. CALE-LIT)	- (0.04)	- (3.82)	+ (12.75)
essays vs. summaries (LICLE-VU vs. CALE-SUM-LIT)	- (0.42)	- (0.78)	- (2.22)
essays vs. proposals (LICLE-VU vs. CALE-PRO-LIT)	- (0.03)	+ (7.11)	+ (12.65)
written academic: summaries vs. proposals (CALE-SUM-LIT vs. CALE-PRO-LIT)	- (0.48)	+ (5.35)	- (0.80)

Figure 4 indicates the distribution of two constructions with *then* in the corpora. The canonical conditional construction *if … then* was used in all the corpora chosen for the study. Though there is no obligatory use of *then* in such conditionals, its presents "requires that the sequence of moves establish a causal explanatory claim" (Biezma 2014, p. 18).
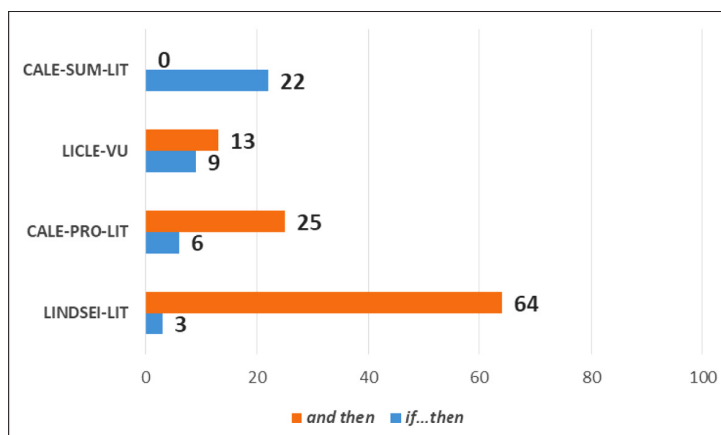

Figure 4. *and then* and *if … then* in the Lithuanian learners' English corpora by percentage.

Intristingly, summaries and proposals, both being academic genres, employ the construction to a different extent.

In the case of the second construction, *and then*, spoken language and summaries constituted two extremes of the scale. There was not a single instance of the construction in the CALE-SUM-LIT corpus whereas in the Lithuanian students' spoken production, more than every second use of *then* (64 per cent) was to indicate succession between ideas, topics, or actions (cf. Schiffrin 1987) with its help. The genre of proposals requires students to present the sequence of their research. In the CALE-PRO-LIT corpus, this resulted in every fourth *then* to be used in the overtly sequence-marking construction *and then*. Since essays are a relatively less regimented genre, the percentage of *and then* was almost twice lower than in proposals.

Conclusions

The aim of the current study was to determine the role of language mode and text genre variables for the use of *then* in the Lithuanian learners' spoken and written production. The results showed direct correlation between language mode and the use of *then*. The role of text genre, however, was proven to be less unequivocal. While no significant differences were observed in the overall use of *then*, some differences appeared in the case of functional distribution. The Lithuanian learners in both language modes and all the genres under consideration proved to favour two functions distinguished for the use of the word in question. Together these results provide preliminary insights into the topic and can serve as the base for further studies.

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Summary

In linguistic literature, learner language has been extensively analysed from various perspectives: based on learners' L1, linguistic features, etc. A large volume of studies has reported on the differences between non-native and native learner English (Hasselgård 2015, Pérez-Paredes 2010, Rozumko 2015). The former has been repeatedly characterised as showing the overuse of the features associated with spoken English (Gilquin and Paquot 2007, Gilquin and Paquot 2008, Russell 2014, Yoon 2015). Though in linguistic analysis, due to its polyfunctional nature, 'then' has been addressed under a number of various labels (a discourse marker (Bellés-Fortuño 2016, Biezma 2014, Fraser 1999, Haselow 2011, Schiffrin 1987, Urgelles-Coll 1987), a linking adverbial (Makauskaitė 2016),

a time adverb (Yilmaz and Dikilitaş 2017), a time adverbial (Crawford 2008), a temporal adverbial (Makauskaitė 2016, Povolná 1998), a circumastance adverbial (Lenker 2010), a modal particle (Haselow 2011), etc), from the quantitative perspective it is reported to be characteristically found in conversations, i.e. spoken English (Biber *et al.* 1999). The present study is limited to the analysis of non-native language produced by the Lithuanian students. Previous research on the Lithuanian learners' language (Bikelienė 2016a, Bikelienė 2016b) proved the institutional variable to play a role in the use of some linguistic constructions, therefore, to control it, only the material produced by the students of Vilnius Univeristy was chosen for the analysis. The paper aims at determining the roles of language mode and text genre on the use of 'then' in the Lithuanian learners' English. Using quantitative and qualitative approaches sections of three corpora representing the spoken (LINDSEI-LIT) and written (LICLE-VU-LIT and CALE-LIT) English produced by the Lithuanian students were analysed. While the results indicate direct correlation between language mode and the use of 'then', the role of genre proved to be less unequivocal.

KEY WORDS: learner language, language mode variable, language genre variable.

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THEN VARTOSENA LIETUVIŲ STUDENTŲ ANGLŲ KALBOJE

Santrauka

Lingvistinėje literatūroje besimokančiųjų anglų kalba yra analizuojama įvairiais aspektais: pagal besimokančiųjų gimtąją kalbą, tiriamos atskiros konstrukcijos, etc. Ankstesniuose tyrimuose buvo nustatyti skirtumai tarp gimtakalbių ir besimokančiųjų anglų kalbos vartosenose (Hasselgård 2015, Pérez-Paredes 2010 , Rozumko 2015). Pastaroji dažnai charakterizuojama kaip turinti itin daug sakytinės kalbos bruožų (Gilquin ir Paquot 2007, 2008; Russell 2014; Yoon 2015 ir tt). Nors lingvistinėje literatūroje dėl savo multifunkcinio pobūdžio *then* (liet. tada) sutinkamas skirtingais pavadinimais (diskurso žymiklis (angl. *discourse marker*) (Bellés-Fortuño 2016, Biezma 2014, Fraser 1999, Haselow 2011, Schiffrin 1987, Urgelles-Coll 1987), jungiamasis adverbialas (angl. *linking adverbial*) (Makauskaitė 2016), laiko prieveiksmis (angl. *time adverb*) (Yilmaz and Dikilitaş 2017), laiko adverbialas (angl. *time adverbial*) (Crawford 2008), (angl. *temporal adverbial*) (Makauskaitė 2016, Povolná 1998), aplinkybinis adverbialas (angl. *circumstance adverbial*) (Lenker 2010), moda- linė dalelytė (angl. *modal particle*) (Haselow 2011) ir kt.), kiekybiniu požiūriu, jis yra priskirtingas sakytinės kalbos bruožams (Biber *et al.* 1999). Šis tyrimas apsiriboja negimtakalbių studentų (lie- tuvių) anglų kalbos analize. Siekiant kontroliuoti institucinį kintamąjį, kurio vaidmuo, kaip parodė ankstesni lietuvių, besimokančiųjų anglų kalbos, anglų kalbos tyrimai (Bikelienė 2016a, Bikelienė 2016b), negali būti ignoruojamas, šiame straipsnyje analizuojami tik Vilniaus universiteto studentų darbai. Straipsnyje siekiama nustatyti sakytinės ir rašytinės raiškos ir teksto žanro vaidmens kinta- mųjų svarbą *then* (liet. tada) vartosenai lietuvių, besimokančių anglų kalbos, darbuose. Kiekybiniam ir kokybiniam tyrimui medžiaga buvo surinkta iš lietuvių, besimokančiųjų anglų kalbos, sakytinės (LINDSEI-LIT) ir rašytinės anglų kalbos (angl. LICLE-VU-LIT ir CALE-LIT) potekstynių. Rezul- tatai atskleidė tiesioginę sąsają tarp kalbos raiškos ir *then* vartosenos, o žanro kintamojo vaidmuo negali būti vertinamas vienareikšmiškai.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: besimokančiųjų kalba, sakytinės ir rašytinės raiškos kintamasis, žanro kintamasis.