

FOREWORD

Human “self” is defined by the ability to go within and look outward. By going inward people engage in self-reflection, whereas by looking beyond themselves humans as social beings express a fundamental need to participate in social interactions, belong and shape their identity.

Identity construction is determined by multiple factors – our actions, experiences, the environment, and, among others, the use of a language. Language is not merely a combination of sounds and words, but one of the principal methods of human communication through which individuals are linked to their family, nation, and culture. It is also the medium of literature, folklore (traditions, customs, and beliefs) and history, which are crucial for transmitting the accumulated wisdom from one generation to another and creating a sense of community. No culture can maintain its existence without a language, therefore language, in fact, is culture and identity. The choice of linguistic expressions and patterns may reveal the peculiarities of a speaker’s social and cultural identity: one can detect diverse gender, class, occupation, dialect and education, power, religion attributes from people’s discourse. Sociocultural phenomena and lingual-cultural influences shape our opinions and behaviours, expand our worldview on our own and others’ cultures, thereby contributing to the construction of individual and collective identities. For centuries, nation-states have been consciously promoting a common language and culture (sometimes also religion) to construct a unified national identity. Throughout history, there have been many attempts to eradicate nations or ethnic groups by eliminating their cultures and languages. Considering pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods, as well as the impact of globalization and interconnectedness of the modern world on present-day society, the pasts are revisited to present the discourse of selfhood and reflect on the processes of identity transformations. Identity formation is being tied to individual and collective history: the link between temporal dimensions – past, present, and future – manifests itself in cultural memory, which is characterized as a dynamic and fluid phenomenon. Col-

lective experiences of the past embodied in texts, rituals, monuments, celebrations and other manifestations, serve for developing one's own image and identity. By increasing social connectedness and augmenting self-continuity, as well as by reconsidering memories, traumatic experiences, and nostalgic feelings, not only the history of the self is created, but recovery from trauma and self-identifications processes may take place, and the identities can be negotiated as well.

This edition of the "Journal of Comparative Studies" includes the research papers that by applying comparative research methodology address various aspects of culture within linguistics, sociolinguistics, literary studies, history, philosophy, political studies and sociology. The studies focus on dynamics of language and culture and contribute to the debate on the "identity challenge" in the framework of contemporary identity crisis. The majority of papers published in this issue were presented at the international academic conference "Human: Language, Society, Culture" organized by Daugavpils University in cooperation with the society "Cultural Artefact" in 2021.

In her paper "Loanwords and their Variation in Kurdish", Aveen Mohammed Hasan provides a comparison of two Kurdish dialects (Northern Kurmanji dialect and Middle Kurmanji dialect) and the loanwords used in their written texts. Considering the fact that borrowings reveal the interrelationships between languages and cultures, the author concludes that due to cross-dialectal differences, the usage frequency is mainly determined by a specific topic and donor language, whereas a linguistic category plays a less significant role. The development of dialects is the outcome of not only the interaction between cultural-historical and social factors, but also a speaker's intention to express one's own identity. Language as the means for expressing power, solidarity, and identity is likewise closely linked with gender, therefore gender and language, on the one hand, and gender and identity, on the other, are interdependent. This aspect is examined by Marjorie Ablanido Maidu who focuses on the masculinities expressed by Filipino seafarers while they are on board and at home through linguistic discourses of gossip and spousal arguments. Gossip as a part of human cultural make-up and a socialization tool is analysed to depict gender as a dimension of identity and language of social identity function of the speakers and how the language and function vary according to the context. The research by Sylwia Janina Wojciechowska compares the novels "To the Lighthouse" by Virginia Woolf and "The Go-Between" by L. P. Hartley to discuss the notions of memory and reflective nostalgia

which can be considered the resource for the “self” in the complicated search for one’s own identity, social belonging and cross-class interactions. The relationship between territoriality and identity construction in three contexts where encounters between colonial powers and local communities have taken place is investigated by Pedro Albuquerque in his article “A Comparative Insight into Encounters, Territorialities, Identities, and Violence: Phoenicians in Southwestern Iberia and Portuguese in Africa”. As it is argued, identity discourse projects itself also in a territory, delimiting it and creating a sense of belonging and collective past. The analysis demonstrates that cultural change is more evident when there is a systematic destruction of territorial markers and construction of new ones. The destruction and construction of territories lead to the destruction or construction of identities as they are interrelated and dependent on each other. By employing imagological and cultural-historical approaches, the paper “The Soviet Image of the USA in Latvian Satirical Journalism of the 1960s: Textual and Visual Code” by Evita Badina, Žans Badins and Oksana Kovzele emphasizes the idea that political caricatures are “[...] a factor of national identity”. Although humour and satire are important devices of social criticism that by depicting social contexts and ideology of a specific epoch also contribute to identity construction at times of political insecurity and cultural crisis, in the decades after WW2, when Iron Curtain policy was implemented between the Eastern and Western bloc countries, the biased image of the USA marked the crisis of national identity and was used as a tool of propaganda to *create* a supranational “Soviet people” and generate a uniform Soviet identity. In his paper “The Classical Message in a Bottle – Should ‘Classical Wisdom’ Determine our Identity and Future?”, Ljuben Tevdovski offers a multidisciplinary perspective on the processes of re-evaluating our identities and values. He discusses the role played by historical heritage on the development of Western society and identity. Considering a complexity of ideas, traditions and experiences, the author emphasizes that his research “is neither suggesting a conclusive interpretation of the ‘classical wisdom’, nor providing recipe for its implementation in contemporary circumstances. Instead, its multi-layered intersection of elements of the past, and the contemporary approaches and methodologies of their reinterpretation and reimagination through the binoculars of different research focuses and disciplines are aiming towards multiplication of the levels of understanding and possibilities of utilisation of this valuable material.”

Finally, “The Research on Culture, Youth and Knowledge Sharing in Latvia” reports the findings of the international project

“Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe’s Future” (CHIEF), funded from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme and led by Aston University (UK). The team of researchers from Daugavpils University – Anita Stašulāne, Ilze Kačāne, Alīna Romanovska, Irēna Saleniece – present the ways young people in Latvia acquire cultural literacy in its diverse forms and contexts (at educational institutions, in non-formal settings, in the family, among peers and in heritage institutions) and debates whether the acquired knowledge enhances youth participation in cultural activities, and contributes to the formation of inclusive identity.

Editors of the Journal:
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