ACQUISITION OF CASE IN LITHUANIAN AS L2: ERROR ANALYSIS

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Abstract. Although teaching Lithuanian as a foreign language is not a new subject, there has not been much research in this field. The paper presents a study based on an analysis of grammatical errors which was carried out at Vytautas Magnus University. The data was selected randomly by analysing written assignments of beginner to advanced level students.

The analysis has shown that the most frequent error is incorrect usage of case, affecting either form or meaning or both. This paper discusses the errors of overgeneralisation in case marking, difficulties in acquiring prepositional constructions and inflectional paradigms.

The paper tries to interpret students' errors and suggests possible explanations, such as the impact of the students' mother tongue, or of English as the language of instruction on their Lithuanian, or the strategy of generalisation.

Keywords: foreign language learning, beginner, intermediate, advanced level students, error analysis, acquisition of cases, Lithuanian

1. Introduction

There has been a lot of research in foreign language learning/teaching mainly dealing with the learning/teaching of widely used languages (for example, English, Spanish, etc.) as foreign languages (Ross 1976, Larsen-Freeman 1991, Kaplan 2002). Lithuanian is a less widely used and taught language, therefore there has been little research on this topic (Čubajevaitė 2007, Mačiukaitė 2008, Ramonienė 1994, 1998, 1999, 2006, Savickienė 2003a, 2005, 2006).

Discussions about foreign language learning/teaching typically raise questions related to the general issue of the language learning process: *How does one learn a language? Are all learners' errors similar? Is it possible and if yes then how to explain the reasons for making errors?* (Savickienė 2003a). Such studies are often descriptive

in nature and their aim is to observe the learners' language development and try to explain how it changes over time, and identify general tendencies (Ellis 1997).

In literature a number of external and internal factors have been mentioned to explain why errors are made. They include the influence of the social learning environment, the input, the stages of the learning process, the knowledge of the native tongue, the learning strategies, the communicative skills, the individual learner differences and instruction (Kaplan 2002, Savickienė 2006).

All the levels (phonetics, lexis, morphology, pragmatics and grammar) of the language are important for the learner. Learning is a complex and dynamic process as a learner, interacting with a new environment, learns more and more new things. Constant and consistent storing of information and knowledge enables a qualitative and quantitative change in the learner's language skills. Starting with the simplest and most common structures, the learner constantly integrates more difficult linguistic features into his/her language system. To achieve a certain linguistic competence the learner has to pass through several stages (Ellis 1997, Mitchell, Myles 1998, Savickienė 2003a). Thus errors in the learning process are a natural phenomenon and a result of the learning process that signal the learner's progress.

While learning a language, grammar is essential for good results in linguistic accuracy (Hinkel, Fotos 2002). The experience of teaching Lithuanian as a foreign language has shown that speakers of languages with a so-called poor morphology (for example, English, German, French, etc. as compared to Lithuanian) find it more difficult to learn Lithuanian as a rich morphology language with a complex morphological structure (Savickienė 2003b). Therefore students make more errors either because of their native language influence or due to the English language, which is the language of instruction during their Lithuanian classes. Moreover, English is most often used by Lithuanian language learners after the classes as a *lingua franca*.

2. Research methods and data

The initial research aims were to investigate what students actually acquire when learning Lithuanian as a foreign language, and how students learn certain grammatical categories (in this paper, cases and declension paradigms). Furthermore, we attempted to classify the students' errors and to explain the reasons for making them in order to reveal the tendencies of how Lithuanian as a foreign language is learnt. We expected that this research would improve our chances to explain the grammatical structure of Lithuanian to our future students.

The error analysis research was carried out at Vytautas Magnus University. It is also based on non-systematic teacher's observations over a long period of teaching practice. The data consists of beginner to advanced level summer course (one month duration) or exchange (one or two semesters' duration) students' written assignments. The error analysis is based on fifty assignments of twenty exchange students, male and female, 20 to 54 years of age. The written assignments included letters, stories, recipes, and the students' opinions on different topics. The focus of the research was on errors related to the use of noun case and declension paradigms. In this paper errors are considered to be the instances that do not comply with the

model of grammatical structure of the Lithuanian language. At the same time errors are welcomed and treated as the students' progress. The students whose assignments are analysed were from a number of different countries: Austria, Columbia, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Poland, Spain, Turkey and the USA. Each example in further sections of the paper has additional information in brackets indicating the native tongue of the student who produced the sentence. Sometimes this information helps to determine the reason for making certain errors.

3. The category of case

Linguistic and communicative competences are interrelated. A student willing to communicate in Lithuanian first of all needs some linguistic knowledge: a minimum of vocabulary and grammar. Since a language learner needs to refer to some objects and phenomena, his/her vocabulary includes a number of nouns already in the initial stages of language acquisition. The category of case is one of the basic categories of the noun, signalling syntactic functions of the noun in a sentence. In the Lithuanian language there are seven noun cases in singular and in plural: nominative, genitive, accusative, dative, instrumental, locative and vocative. In Lithuanian most masculine nouns end in *-(i)as*, *-is* or *-ys*, and take the so-called first declension. Most feminine nouns end in *-(i)a* or *-ė*, and take the second declension. The first and the second declensions are the most productive of the declension types. In addition, some feminine nouns end in *-is* and take the third declension, some masculine nouns end in *-us* and take the fourth declension, and some masculine and feminine nouns end in *-uo* and *-ė* and take the fifth declension. Table 1 illustrates the two most productive declension groups.

Table 1. Examples of the first and second declensions of Lithuanian nouns

Case	1st declension		2nd declension	
SG	*-as*	*-is*	*-a*	*-ė*
NOM	*miest-as*	*brol-is*	*dien-a*	*klas-ė*
GEN	*miest-o*	*brol-io*	*dien-os*	*klas-ės*
ACC	*miest-ą*	*brol-į*	*dien-ą*	*klas-ę*
DAT	*miest-ui*	*brol-iui*	*dien-ai*	*klas-ei*
INS	*miest-u*	*brol-iu*	*dien-a*	*klas-e*
LOC	*miest-e*	*brol-yje*	*dien-oje*	*klas-ėje*
VOC	*miest-e*	*brol-i*	*dien-a*	*klas-e*
PL	1st declension		2nd declension	
NOM	*miest-ai*	*brol-iai*	*dien-os*	*klas-ės*
GEN	*miest-ų*	*brol-ių*	*dien-ų*	*klas-ių*
ACC	*miest-us*	*brol-ius*	*dien-as*	*klas-es*
DAT	*miest-ams*	*brol-iams*	*dien-oms*	*klas-ėms*
INS	*miest-ais*	*brol-iais*	*dien-omis*	*klas-ėmis*
LOC	*miest-uose*	*brol-iuose*	*dien-ose*	*klas-ėse*
VOC	*miest-ai*	*brol-iai*	*dien-os*	*klas-ės*

Table 2 demonstrates how frequently different cases are used in spoken Lithuanian (Savickienė 2005).

Table 2. The frequency distribution of cases (%) in spoken Lithuanian

Case	NOM	GEN	ACC	DAT	INS	LOC
Percentage	32%	28%	18%	9%	5%	3%

As Table 2 demonstrates, nominative and genitive are the most frequent cases, whereas dative, instrumental and locative are seldom used; accusative comes third on the frequency list.

A morphological description of the case forms implies reference to syntax and semantics: these levels of linguistic analysis provide a necessary condition for disclosing the nature of this category. The category of case is considered to be one of the most complex grammatical categories. This is due to several reasons: first, the category of case is morphological in form and syntactic in content; second, it enters into multiple oppositions. It is generally accepted that language learners tend to acquire binary oppositions more easily than multiple ones (Savickienė 2003b).

As case is one of the most complex categories that Lithuanian language learners have to acquire it was in the focus of our research. In further sections of the paper the most frequent errors that students made in their assignments are discussed. These include use of an inappropriate case, irregular prepositional constructions and erroneous case paradigms. In the provided examples errors are highlighted by bold type and the appropriate word form is provided in square brackets. Each example has an English translation under it. For the erroneous word forms, the following grammatical categories are pointed out: number (singular, plural) gender (feminine, masculine.), case (nominative, genitive, accusative, dative, instrumental, locative, vocative).

3.1. Nominative case errors

The preliminary data of spoken Lithuanian show that the nominative case is used most frequently and is considered to be the unmarked member of the Lithuanian case system (Savickienė 2005). The nominative singular case form is the first used consistently as it is learned in Lithuanian as a foreign language from the very beginning. Due to the lack of linguistic competence in students, errors of overgeneralising the use of the nominative occur rather frequently (Savickienė 2006).

3.1.1. The use of the nominative instead of the accusative (as object case)

Students do not find any difficulties in using the nominative case to denote the subject in a sentence. However, beginner level students use the nominative in other functions or contexts as well. The research results show that students overgeneralise the nominative case and use it instead of the accusative to express the object after transitive verbs, as can be seen in examples (1)–(4):

(1) *Čia tu sutinki* **draugas**: SG:M:NOM [= *draugą*: SG:ACC]. (Spanish)
    'Here you meet **a friend**'

(2) *Lietuvoje jūs geriate **geras***: SG:M:NOM ***alus***: SG:M:NOM [= *gerą alų*: SG:ACC] *ir **degtinė***: SG:F:NOM [= *degtinę*: SG:ACC]. (Spanish)
'In Lithuania you drink **good beer** and **vodka**'

(3) *Čia pigu pirkti **suvenyras***: SG:M:NOM [= *suvenyrus*: PL:ACC]. (Spanish)
'It is cheap to buy **souvenir** here'

(4) *Jei tu mėgsti **lietus***: SG:M:NOM [= *lietų*: SG:ACC]*, važiuok į Lietuvą.* (English)
'If you like **rain**, go to Lithuania'

Although the verbs *mėgti* ('to like'), *gerti* ('to drink') and *pirkti* ('to buy') are most frequently used by beginner level students, Examples (1)–(4) show that students have not yet learnt what cases these verbs require.

Even if the students know that transitive verbs require the accusative or genitive, their assignments may contain errors of this type, as in Example (5).

(5) *Jūs galite susitinkate **naują***: SG:M:ACC ***žmonės***: PL:M:NOM [= *naujus žmones*: PL:ACC]. (German)
'You can you meet **a new people**'

Example (5) shows that the student knows that the verb *susitikti* ('to meet') requires the accusative case as is demonstrated by the correct form of the adjective. However, the adjective is used in its singular form instead of the necessary plural. This mistake may have occurred due to the complicated declension of the word *žmonės* ('people'). Evidently Lithuanian language learners find the paradigm difficult to remember.

Errors of this type occur even when students are in the intermediate or advanced level, as can be seen in Example (6):

(6) *Meistras atsakė: "Koks buvo darbas, toks bus ir atlyginimas", ir jis padavė Hansui **vienas***: SG:M:NOM ***auksinio luitas***: SG:M:NOM [= *vieną*: SG:ACC *aukso*: SG:GEN *luitą*: SG:ACC]*, kuris buvo tiek pat didelis kaip Hanso galva.* (German)
'The master said: "the payment will be as your work was" and he gave Hans **one piece of gold** as big as Hans's head'

Example (6) reveals the student's learning progress: it is a long well-formed sentence with a complex structure where the numeral and the noun are in agreement. The only drawback is that the nominative is used instead of the accusative for the noun *luitas* and the numeral *vienas*. As upper-intermediate level students have the necessary skills and knowledge to produce longer and more complex expressions, their curriculum includes teaching longer sentences and rules of writing stories (Pribušauskaitė et al. 2000). Although intermediate or higher level students are able to use simple expressions correctly, they are misled by more complex sentences and constructions and they make errors of using the nominative instead of an appropriate case.

Often errors of this type occur when making sentences with less frequent verbs. For example,

(7) *Jonas vedė **princesė***: SG:F:NOM [= *princesę*: SG:ACC]. (English)
'Jonas married a **princess**'

(8) *Nėra kiekio, bet **viskas***: SG:M:NOM [= *viską*: SG:ACC] *maišai, kol bus gražus tešla.* (French)
   'There is no amount, but mix **everything** until you get nice dough'

(9) *Aš atsibundu ir pradedu čiupinėti savo **burna***: SG:F:NOM [= *burną*: SG:ACC]. (Latvian)
   'Then I wake up and start touching my **mouth**'

In Examples (7)–(9) the nominative case is used instead of the required accusative. As the verbs *vesti* ('to marry'), *maišyti* ('to mix'), *čiupinėti* ('to touch') are less frequently used, students find it more difficult to remember what case these verbs require.

3.1.2. The use of the nominative instead of the accusative (for time/duration)

In the Lithuanian language duration is marked by the accusative case. However, L2[1] learners sometimes use the nominative instead, as can be seen in Example (10):

(10) *Hansas dirbo **septyni***: PL:M:NOM ***metai***: PL:M:NOM [= *septynerius metus*: ACC] *už savo meistrą ir jis norėjo eiti namo pas motiną.* (German)
   'Hans worked **for seven years** for his master and wanted to go home to his mother'

The error of using the nominative case instead of the accusative in Example (10) might be influenced by the student's native tongue: in German a construction with the nominative[2] would also be appropriate to express time.

3.1.3. The use of the nominative case instead of the genitive

Research has shown that the genitive of quantifiers is another cause of student difficulty. In the Lithuanian language, the adverb *daug* ('many, much') requires the genitive case. The research data show that rather often students use the nominative if they do not know this rule. For example,

(11) *Čia yra daug **pilys***: PL:F:NOM [= *pilių*: PL:GEN]. (German)
   'There are many **castles** here'

(12) *Lietuvoje yra daug **gėlės***: PL:F:NOM *ir **daržovės***: PL:F:NOM [= *gėlių*: PL:GEN *ir daržovių*: PL:GEN]. (English)
   'In Lithuania there many **flowers** and **vegetables**'

Examples (11) and (12) indicate that students already understand the meaning of the adverb *daug* ('many'), which is 'more than one'. Thus they use the necessary plural of the noun to follow. However, the peculiarity of *daug* has not been acquired yet, thus students choose an inappropriate case form to represent the meaning. Similar errors are often made with other quantifiers such as *mažai* ('a little'), *šiek tiek* ('some'), *truputį* ('a little bit'), etc.

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[1] In this paper, the abbreviation *L2* is used to refer to Lithuanian as a foreign language.
[2] According to editors' information, German would use the accusative here, e.g. *Peter hat **einen Tag** (lang) auf Anna gewartet.* (Grundzüge einer deutschen Grammatik. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1984, p. 411.) – Editor's note.

Another category of errors with the nominative instead of the genitive are those of the genitive of negation. It takes time for beginner level students to learn and remember that a negative verb requires the genitive case of the direct object. Example (13) shows the very initial stage of a learning process, where the generalised nominative is used:

(13) *Aš neturiu **mėgstamiausias**: SG:M:NOM **patiekalas**: SG:M:NOM [= mėgstamiausio: SG:GEN patiekalo: SG:GEN]. (French)*
'I do not have a most favourite dish'

However, Example (13) also shows the student's progress, as there is a noun and adjective gender agreement in the sentence. However, the rule of the genitive of negation has not been learnt yet and the student uses the nominative case instead. Such errors are very typical of beginner level students.

3.2. Genitive case errors

The primary function of the genitive in L2 discourse was to express possession and direction (the prepositional phrase *iš* 'from' + GEN). The object genitive, especially the genitive of negation, becomes particularly intensive and erroneous in L2, especially in later stages of acquisition of Lithuanian.

The results show that students make less errors with the genitive case than with the nominative. This is quite natural: students use the nominative instead of other cases. One of the most typical errors that we noticed was the use of the genitive instead of other cases in reference to the object, for example:

(14) *Aš dovanosiu savo senelei **suvenyro**: SG:M:GEN [= suvenyrą: SG:ACC] iš Lietuvos. (Japanese)*
'I will give **a souvenir** from Lithuania as a present to my grandmother'

Example (14) suggests that the student knows that it is necessary to use a case to indicate the object and decides to use the genitive instead of the necessary accusative.

Beginner level students find it difficult to use the verb *patikti* ('to like') correctly. In Lithuanian this verb needs the dative for the experiencer and the nominative for the stimulus. However, it differs from most of other Lithuanian verbs, and students make errors. For example:

(15) *Mano šalyje man patinka eiti į kiną, bet Lietuvoje man patinka **kelionių**: PL:F:GEN [= kelionės: PL:NOM]. (Polish)*
'In my country I like going to a cinema, but in Lithuania I like **travels**'

Example (15) shows that the student does not remember yet that the verb *patikti* requires the nominative in Lithuanian and chooses the genitive instead.

Some students find it difficult to express time duration correctly. For example,

(16) *Dabar aš gyvenu Kaune ir aš gyvensiu **keturių**: PL:M:GEN **metų**: PL:M:GEN [= ketverius metus: PL:ACC] Lietuvoje. (Korean)*
'Now I live in Kaunas and I will live in Lithuania **for four years**'

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In Example (16), similarly to Example (10), the student does not know the rules for the time expression yet. Nevertheless, the student's progress is obvious, that is, the Korean student uses the plural genitive that orthographically reminds one of the singular accusative case instead of the nominative that was used in Example (10).

3.3. Dative case errors

As the semantics of the dative is not as clear as that of the nominative or genitive, it takes more time to learn and acquire the subtleties of its use. Consider Example (17):

(17) *Po to jis susitiko **berniukui***: SG:M:DAT [= *berniuką*: SG:ACC] *su žąsiu.* (German)
'Then he met **a boy** with a goose'

The use of the dative case in Example (17) is most probably due to the influence of the student's native tongue. Depending on the context, the verb treffen ('to meet') in the German language, requires either the accusative case or the dative with the preposition mit ('with').

One of the reasons why the dative is used erroneously might be the polysemy of certain verbs. For example,

(18) *Kai **jam***: SG:M:DAT [= *jis*: SG:NOM] *pasirodė, aš buvau labai laiminga ir džiaugiausi.* (Japanese)
'When **he** showed up, I was very happy and glad'

The verb *pasirodyti* has more than one meaning: 'to come', 'to turn out', etc. Example (18) demonstrates that the student knows the government of this verb in its 'to seem, to look like' meaning and therefore, chooses the dative case instead of the nominative. Here the drawbacks of dictionaries should also be mentioned. It might be assumed that in this case the student consulted a dictionary where polysemous verbs are not illustrated with clear examples which would make it easier to detect the grammatical information.

Subordinate clauses are another category that is difficult for students to master. Even advanced level students who are already able to use the dative case correctly make errors when it comes to complex sentences. For instance,

(19) *Mano baisiausias sapnas buvo apie berniuką, **kuriam***: SG:M:DAT [= *kuris*: SG:NOM] *man patiko vaikystėje.* (Japanese)
'My worst dream was about a boy **whom** I liked in the childhood'

Example (19) shows that the student knows the government of the verb *patikti* ('to like'), but applies it incorrectly. In this example the error occurs due to the complexity of the sentence. Lithuanian complex sentences are learnt rather late by students (they start forming them only in the upper intermediate level). Therefore, while creating longer sentences, students have to process more information and thus make errors.

3.4. Accusative case errors

When learning Lithuanian as L2, the most troubling issue is the use of cases. Errors become especially frequent when it comes to the difference in verb rules for affirmative and negative sentences. Therefore, when producing sentences with negative verbs, students incorrectly use the accusative for the direct object instead of the required genitive, as the following examples demonstrate:

> (20) *...nes niekada nematau nei* **pavidalą**: SG:M:ACC [= *pavidalo*: SG:M:GEN]*, nei* **išvaizdą**: SG:F:ACC [= *išvaizdos*]. (Polish)
> '...for I never see neither **the profile**, nor the appearance'

> (21) *Viena diena karvė neduoda* **pieną**: SG:M:ACC [= *pieno*: SG:M:GEN]. (English)
> 'One day the cow does not give **milk**'

> (22) *Aš nežiūriu* **televizorių**: SG:M:ACC [= *televizoriaus*: SG:M:GEN]*, nes neturiu bendrabutyje.* (Polish)
> 'I do not watch **TV**, as I do not have [it] in the dormitory'

> (23) *Ji atsakė, kad jo broliai neišlaikė* **bandymą**: SG:M:ACC [= *bandymo*: SG:M:GEN] *ir yra užburti.* (Latvian)
> 'She replied that her brothers had not overcome **the trial** and were under the spell'

Examples (20)–(23) serve as evidence that students know the rule that transitive verbs require the accusative case in affirmative sentences. However, the provided examples are negative sentences; thus, in these sentences the genitive case is to be used after each verb (*nematau, neduoda, nežiūriu, neišlaikė*).

As in some languages (Latvian or German, for instance) the noun case does not change after a negative verb Latvian and German students do not change it when speaking Lithuanian either. It should be noted, however, that even though in Polish like in the Lithuanian language the noun case does change after a negation of the verb, the same error is as typical in Polish students' L2 perfomance as in that of the Latvians or Germans.

3.5. Locative case errors

In this section two aspects of inappropriate locative usage will be discussed. First of all we will focus on locative case errors where the locative expresses time. Then some lines will be spent on locative case errors in expressing direction.

Although locative is a case with simple semantics most often used to express location, it is sometimes used for time as well. As the meaning of time for the locative is not so natural it is used only with very few nouns of special meaning. Students sometimes use it to express time and make errors. For example,

> (24) **Naktyje**: SG:F:LOC [= *naktį*: SG:ACC] *beveik visai nebijau miegoti tamsu kambaryje.* (Polish)
> '**At night** I have almost no fear to sleep in the dark room'

(25) ***Naktyje***: SG:F:LOC [= *naktį*: SG:ACC], *kada Pelenei reikėjo padaryti sunkiausius darbus, atėjo jos krikšto motina jai padėti.* (Latvian)
'**At night** when Cinderella had to do the hardest work, her godmother came for help'

(26) *Kada atsibudau **rytoje***: SG:F:LOC [= *rytą*: SG:ACC] *aš buvau labai pavargusi.* (Latvian)
'When I woke up **in the morning** I was very tired'

(27) *Katinuko malūnai dirbo **dienoje***: SG:F:LOC *ir **naktyje***: SG:F:LOC [= *dieną*: SG:ACC *ir naktį*: SG:ACC]. (Latvian)
'The Kitten's mills worked **day** and **night**'

In Examples (24)–(27) students have used the locative case instead of the accusative. Errors of this type are typical of Polish and Latvian students. As in Polish and Latvian the locative is used to express time, the students apply the same rule when communicating in Lithuanian. Another reason for this type of errors might be the incorrect use of the locative by native speakers of Lithuanian in spoken language. Students may have heard *ryte* ('in the morning', LOC) and *vakare* ('in the evening', LOC) when talking to native Lithuanians and thus by analogy use the locative with all words to express time.

Prepositional constructions are mostly used to express direction in the Lithuanian language. L2 learners extend the meaning of the locative and use the case not only to express location but direction as well, as can be seen in Example (28).

(28) *Tada staiga aš suklupau ir įkritau **upėje***: SG:F:LOC [= *į upę*: SG:ACC]. (Latvian)
'Then I stumbled and fell **into the river**'

The reason for such errors is most probably the influence of the student's native tongue. In Latvian direction can be expressed by the locative, thus the student applies this rule in a Lithuanian sentence (28) as well.

3.6. Errors in prepositional constructions

The Lithuanian rules of preposition government cause a number of difficulties for foreign students, as the research data shows. In this section two types of errors will be discussed. Firstly, those that are made because students do not know what case a certain preposition requires, and secondly, errors of choosing an inappropriate preposition to express a certain meaning will be discussed.

3.6.1. The use of an inappropriate preposition

Prepositional constructions are rather difficult for L2 learners to acquire. In this section errors with some prepositions will be discussed. The construction with the preposition *už* ('behind, for') is most often used incorrectly instead of just the dative case, as demonstrated in Examples (29) and (30):

(29) *Hansas dirbo septyni metai **už savo meistrą**: SG:M:ACC [= savo meistrui*: SG:DAT] *ir jis norėjo eiti namo pas motiną.* (German)
'Hans worked for seven years **for his master** and wanted to go home to his mother'

(30) ***Už laimę***: SG:F:ACC [= *laimei*: SG:F:DAT]*, nežinau, kas atsitiko toliau, nes aš atsibudau.* (Latvian)
'**Luckily**, I do not know what happened next, because I woke up'

Both examples show the influence of either by the students' native tongue or by the English language. Example (30) is an obvious translation of the Latvian expression *uz laime* ('luckily'); thus instead of the dative case a prepositional construction is used. These errors mostly occur in the intermediate or advanced level.

Errors with the preposition *į* ('to') are most commonly related to the expression of location or direction, as research findings suggest:

(31) *Lietuvoje jūs galite atostogauti **į Palangą**: SG:F:ACC [= Palangoje*: SG:LOC] *prie jūros.* (Spanish)
'In Lithuania you can have holidays **in Palanga**, at the seaside'

(32) *Mano draugė iš Ispanijos aplankys mane spalio dvidešimt septintą **į Kauną**: SG:M:ACC [= Kaune*: SG:LOC]. (Japanese)
'My friend from Spain will visit me **in Kaunas** on the 27th of October'

Examples (31) and (32) show that the students already know the rule of expressing direction by the construction with the preposition *į*; now they overgeneralise and use the rule to express location as well. This type of errors have also been observed in first language acquisition when children mix up the meaning of direction (prepositional construction) with the meaning of location (locative case) (Savickienė 2003b).

3.6.2. The use of an inappropriate case

Most commonly students acquire the meaning of prepositions rather easily, but make errors when choosing the appropriate case to be used after a particular preposition. The research data provide examples of all of the cases used incorrectly after prepositions. These will be discussed briefly in the following subsections.

3.6.2.1. The nominative used with a preposition

The nominative case is not used in prepositional constructions in Lithuanian, but beginner level students make such errors as they do not have enough grammar knowledge of what case is to be used after a particular preposition.

(33) *Man labai patiko važiuoti **į Trakai**: PL:M:NOM [= Trakus*: PL:ACC]. (Japanese)
'I liked going to **Trakai** very much'

(34) *Aš esu laimingiausias žmogus iš **visi**: PL:M:NOM [= visų*: PL:GEN]. (German)
'I am the happiest man of **all**'

In Example (33) the student understands that the meaning of direction is expressed with the prepositional construction. However, the student does not know yet that *į* ('to') requires the accusative case. Example (34) allows us to speculate that the student is misled by the pronoun that follows the preposition. Pronouns are seldom used in L2 learners' discourse, thus their declension is more problematic for the students.

3.6.2.2. The genitive used with a preposition

According to the research findings, errors with an inappropriate genitive use are mostly related to expression of time. For example,

(35) *Išvyka buvo organizuota semestro pabaigą, tuoj <u>prieš</u> **<u>egzamino</u>**:* SG:M:GEN ***sesijos***: SG:F:GEN [= *egzaminų*: PL:GEN *sesiją*: SG:ACC]. (Polish)
'The trip was organized at the end of the semester, before the very beginning of **exam session**'

Although prepositional constructions are often used to express time, learning them is a slow and complex process. In Example (35) the student may have been misled not by the preposition, but by the fact that the whole construction has to be considered. Thus the student uses the genitive in the noun that should be in the accusative case.

3.6.2.3. The dative used with a preposition

The dative case is not used with any preposition at all in the Lithuanian language. Rare as they are, the research data contain examples of such errors.

(36) *Bet kad situacija pasitaisytų, reikia netylėti, kalbėti <u>su</u> **<u>kitiems</u>**:* PL:M:DAT [= *kitais*: PL:INS] *ir su psichologais*. (Latvian)
'But to make the situation better, one should not be silent and talk to **others** and psychologists'

Such errors are probably caused by a rare and therefore more difficult use of pronouns: the student chooses the appropriate case (instrumental) for the noun *psichologais*, but makes an error when searching for an appropriate pronoun ending.

3.6.2.4. The accusative used with a preposition

The more declension paradigms students learn, the more difficult it becomes to handle the abundance of information. Therefore, errors of confusing the genitive and accusative cases occur.

(37) *Karalius paskyrė dovaną **<u>už užmušimas</u>**: SG:M:ACC **<u>drakoną</u>**:* SG:M:ACC [= *drakono*: SG:GEN *užmušimą*: SG:ACC]. (Polish)
'The king announced a prize for **killing of the dragon**'

Example (37) illustrates those cases when the preposition *už* is followed by a noun in the accusative case. However, when the preposition goes with a possessive genitive construction, the student is misled and produces an inappropriate noun form following the preposition rule. It should be noted that errors occur rather often when students have to create longer sentences. Then they have to think not only about what case is required by a particular preposition but also about how to make the nouns in the construction agree with each other. Some research results indicate that students manage to handle one of the two aspects. For example,

(38) *Jonas sutiko milžinišką moterį <u>prie **milžinišką**</u>*: SG:F:ACC <u>***namą***</u>: SG:M:ACC [= *milžiniško*: SG:GEN *namo*: SG:GEN]. (English)
'Jonas met a giant woman near **the giant house**'

Example (38) shows that the student does not know what case is required by the preposition *prie* and uses the accusative case. As for the student's progress, it is indicated by the correct noun–adjective agreement.

3.6.2.5. The instrumental used with a preposition

Although the instrumental case is learnt by L2 learners rather late (due to the infrequent use of this case), the research findings were somewhat surprising in that students used the instrumental instead of another more familiar and more frequent case. Consider the example below:

(39) <u>*Tarp **šiais***</u>: PL:M:INS <u>***žaislais***</u>: PL:M:INS [= *šių*: PL:GEN *žaislų*: PL:GEN] *buvo viena balerina ir vienas švino kareivis*. (Turkish)
'There was one ballet dancer and one plumbic soldier among **these toys**'

As can be seen in Example (39), the student uses the instrumental, which is a less frequently used case, instead of the required genitive, a case that is learnt earlier and used more frequently. The reason may be that the student does not know yet the usage peculiarities of the preposition *tarp* ('among').

3.6.2.6. The locative used with a preposition

The locative is not used with any preposition in the Lithuanian language, but foreign students form prepositional constructions with the locative rather frequently. This holds for beginners and even for advanced level students. For example,

(40) *Visą vasarą katinukas bastėsi ir nuėjo **prie** karaliaus **pilyje***: SG:F:LOC [= *pilies*: SG:GEN / *į pilį*: SG:ACC]. (Latvian)
'The Kitten wandered all summer and went **to** the king's **palace**'

(41) *Kada Pelenė įėjo **į salėje***: SG:F:LOC [= *salę*: SG:ACC]*, visi žiūrėjo ir stebėjosi, kokia ji graži*. (Latvian)
'When Cinderella entered **the hall**, everyone watched her and wondered how beautiful she was'

The locative is not frequently used and has one main function, that is, to express the meaning of being inside. Other ways of expressing space, location and direction are prepositional constructions. Examples (40) and (41) show that the students know the rule for expressing location, when the locative is to be used, but make errors using this case with prepositions. Examples (40) and (41) are sentences of Latvian students, thus it can be claimed that these errors are influenced not by the students' native tongue, but by Russian, which is widely spoken in Latvia and has an impact on Latvian (Djačkova 2003, Metuzale-Kangere, Ozolins 2005). In the Russian language prepositional constructions with the locative are used.

3.7. Inappropriate use of declension paradigms

When learning a foreign language, learners often make generalisations of grammar rules: after having learnt one rule, they apply it to other cases even where it is not applicable. Such a learning process is positive as it shows the student's progress. Students acquire very quickly that in Lithuanian nouns of the masculine gender mostly end in *-as*, *-is*, *-us*. Later on, according to the overgeneralisation tendency, students treat all nouns with the ending *-s* as belonging to the masculine gender. This is illustrated by Examples (42)–(44).

(42) *Po to jis susitiko berniukui su **žąsiu***: SG:M:INS [= *žąsimi*: SG:F:INS]. (German)
   'Then he met a boy with a **goose**'

(43) *Aš manau, kad reikia įstatymų leidėjams priimti įstatymą apie eutana-ziją **visuose***: PL:M:LOC ***šaliuose***: PL:M:LOC [= *visose*: PL:F:LOC *šalyse*: PL:F:LOC]. (Latvian)
   'I think that all legislators in all countries should pass **a law** on euthana-sia'

(44) *Aš negaliu suprasti, kodėl **moteriai***: PL:M:NOM [= *moterys*: PL:NOM] *leidžia smurtą šeimoje*. (Latvian)
   'I cannot understand why **women** allow violence in the family'

The findings suggest that students often confuse the types of the paradigms of noun declension. Students treat these feminine nouns, that belong to a different noun declension paradigm as masculine ones. Thus they often decline *pilis* ('castle'), *stotis* ('station') and *žuvis* ('fish'), which are of feminine gender, as *brolis* ('brother'), which is masculine. The main reason for this type of errors is the unmarked ending for masculine nouns *-is*. Students have to remember that there is a certain set of nouns, which end in *-is* in the nominative, but in *-ies* in the genitive, that belong to a different paradigm and to a different gender, namely, feminine. Examples (42)–(44) are very typical instances of such an overgeneralisation: the case forms are correct, but the words *žąsis* ('goose'), *šalis* ('country') and *moteris* ('woman') are treated according to the paradigm of masculine nouns.

One more reason for making errors related to inappropriate declension para-digms is students' reliance on their native tongue. When speaking or writing, L2 learners often translate from their own native language. If a word in the learner's

native tongue is of a different gender than in Lithuanian, it is more likely that the student will make an error. Examples (45)–(46) illustrate the case:

(45) *Beveik visą šeštadienį buvome **pliažoje***: SG:F:LOC [= *pliaže*: SG:LOC] – *deginomės, žaidėme futbolo ir tinklinio.* (Polish)
'Almost all Saturday we were on **the beach** sunbathing and playing football'

(46) *Bet nieko, buvo mano **pirma***: SG:F:NOM ***karta***: SG:F:NOM [= *pirmas*: SG:NOM *kartas*: SG:NOM]. (Spanish)
'But no problem, it was my **first time**'

In Example (45) the noun *pliažas* is perceived as belonging to the feminine gender. This is an influence of the student's native tongue as the word *plaża* ('beach') in Polish is of the feminine gender. An analogous case is in Example (46), where the noun *kartas* is perceived as one of the feminine gender as it is in Spanish *vez* ('time').

Once an inappropriate noun paradigm is chosen, the advanced level student makes an error by considering the noun and adjective agreement. For example,

(47) *Jis dirba **žinome***: SG:M:LOC ***firme***: SG:M:LOC [= *žinomoje*: SG:F:LOC *firmoje*: SG:F:LOC] *ir yra labai turtingas.* (Japanese)
'He works **in a known company** and is very rich'

The student chooses the correct case form and makes the adjective and noun agree as required by Lithuanian grammar. However, both the noun and the adjective in Example (47), are treated as belonging to the masculine gender. As there is no gender category in Japanese or English, this example (47) might be considered as a case of learning a false paradigm for the word. As for the students' progress or learning strategies, it can be added that Example (47) demonstrates a frequent strategy of generalising and using *-e* as the locative ending for all declension paradigms. This shows that the student understands the meaning of the cases and tries to communicate it, but it is rather difficult and time consuming to remember all declension paradigms. Interestingly, exactly similar strategies in learning the case forms and meanings and also similar errors were observed in both L1 and L2 (Savickienė 2006).

4. Summary and conclusion

Lithuanian is a highly inflected language; therefore the acquisition of case forms and meaning is quite a complicated task for L2 learners.

The research has shown that due to the complexity of this category, most errors occurred in the production of three grammatical cases: nominative, genitive and accusative, which are the most important for sentence formation. The most typical errors are as follows:
1) overgeneralisation of the nominative. The most frequently used case form in L2 learners' speech is the nominative in the function of grammatical subject (this function is exceptionally easy to master due to its pragmatics); this form is often overused in the contexts of the accusative or the genitive;

2) inappropriate case form after a preposition. L2 learners most often produce a correct preposition, but the case used with the preposition usually appears in a wrong form;

3) inappropriate case form after a negated verb. In negative constructions students tend to use the accusative case instead of the genitive in the function of direct object;

4) erroneous expression of time, location and direction. The concepts were confused especially in those students in whose native languages the expression of these meanings involves different formal constructions, i.e. case vs. prepositional phrase;

5) confusing of words of different declension paradigms. The tendency of students using the right case form but a wrong declension type of a noun was observed especially with nouns belonging to different genders.

When learning Lithuanian, L2 students acquire the meanings of cases gradually. Therefore, errors are a sign of their progress. The results confirmed the hypothesis that students often rely on their native tongue and apply the translation model as a learning strategy. An impact of English as the language of instruction was also observed.

The overgeneralisation strategy, especially in the use of the nominative, was observed in learning Lithuanian, and this supports the general learning tendency where the principle of analogy is applied for different contexts in first and second language acquisition (Savickienė 2003b, 2006). Although no quantitative research was carried out, our study reflects the tendencies of problematic use of the cases. The complicated process of the acquisition of case form and meaning has been observed in other case languages, such as Latvian, Russian, Polish, Greek, in first language acquisition research (Ceytlin 1988, 1997, Christofidou, Stephany 1997, Rūķe-Draviņa 1982, Smoczynska 1985, Stephany 1997, 1998, Voeikova, Savickienė 2001).

These findings bring more light on Lithuanian as a second language and show similarities and differences in L1 and L2. Moreover, it could suggest some applicable recommendations for L2 language classes. The traditional method of teaching a grammatical rule and then applying it in grammatical exercises does not guarantee effective language learning. The importance of communicative competence and learning the form from the context should be emphasised more. Teachers should encourage students to identify grammatical tendencies rather than just to learn grammar rules by heart and drill them (Hinkel, Fotos 2002).

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LEEDU KEELE KUI TEISE KEELE KÄÄNETE OMANDAMINE: VEAANALÜÜS

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Leedu keele õpetamine võõrkeelena pole küll uus valdkond, kuid seda on veel vähe uuritud. Artikkel põhineb Vytautas Magnuse Ülikoolis läbiviidud grammatikavigade uuringul, mille materjaliks olid keeleõppijate juhuslikult valitud kirjalikud tööd. Neid kirjutanud üliõpilased (algajatest edasijõudnuteni) on pärit mitmelt maalt: Austriast, Kolumbiast, Prantsusmaalt, Saksamaalt, Jaapanist, Koreast, Lätist, Poolast, Hispaaniast, Türgist, USA-st. Kokku analüüsiti 50 teksti (e-kirja, muinasjuttu, retsepti, arvamuskirjutist) 20 üliõpilaselt.

Ilmnes, et kõige rohkem eksitakse käänete kasutamises, nii vormis kui tähenduses. Artiklis käsitletakse sagedaimaid vigu, kus kasutati vale käänet objekti vormistamiseks, koha, suuna ja aja väljendamiseks, kaassõnaühendites ja eitava verbivormi laiendina, samuti eksimusi käänamistüübi valikul.

Vaadeldakse ka vigade võimalikke põhjusi. Ilmneb õppija emakeele ja inglise keele kui õppekeele mõju; üldistamisstrateegia (äraõpitud reeglit rakendatakse ka juhtudel, kus see ei sobi) ja paraku ka eksitav või puudulik grammatiline ja pragmaatiline info kasutatud sõnaraamatutes.

Võtmesõnad: võõrkeeleõpe, algaja, kesktase, edasijõudnu, veaanalüüs, käänete omandamine, leedu keel