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Effects of the Linguistic Context on Identity Relevant Self-Characterization in Bilinguals¹

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Abstract: A survey was conducted among Hungarian-Romanian-English multilinguals (N=237) with the aim of investigating the individual differences in cultural preferences and value priorities. Participants completed questionnaires measuring: (a) the individual level of national identification (Collective Self-Esteem); (b) own-culture preference (Patriotism); (c) ethnocentric proclivity toward other cultures (Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale); and, (d) the relative importance of 10 universal value types (Portrait Values Questionnaire) in three groups. Native (Hungarian) and acquired languages (Romanian, English) were used for filling out questionnaires for the three groups. Linguistic effects appeared on ethnocentrism, patriotism and collective aspects of self-esteem, but the effects were absent on personal aspect of self-esteem and prevailingly on value priorities. Results may indicate a kind of linguistic relativity in identity relevant self-characterization.

Keywords: patriotism, ethnocentrism, cultural identity, linguistic relativity, bilingualism

1. Introduction

“The more languages you speak, the more of a person you are” – as the proverb goes. This idea invokes an “evergreen” dilemma about the interrelationship between language and thought that philosophers, psychologists, linguists and more recently, cognitive neuroscientists have been concerned about for a long time. It has been

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remarked that the language-thought dispute/dilemma is one of the vivid, unresolved controversies in the field of psychology (A. Greenwald 2012).

On the one side of the dilemma, from the universalist point of view, language is supposed to be framed by the abstract, universal categories (space, time, causality) of human cognition that are common for each particular language (see S. Pinker 1994). Semantic distinctions, or any sort of differences between languages, do not affect the way of perceiving the word, interpreting the experiences, assimilating the impressions. Contrary to the universalist account, from a relativist point of view, language has an impact on how we perceive the world around us as well as how we think about our world (see S. Pinker 1994). The strongest version of this idea, usually termed as linguistic determinism, holds, that language is not simply reflected in the surface of the way thoughts are communicated, but rather that language is fundamental to determining cognition, deep into our elementary cognitive mechanisms. In fact, it appears that language variation causes differences in cognition. The refined relativist account—usually referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis – claims that thought is influenced by socially constructed and mediated concepts and categories of any given language. Any particular language imposes constraints and sets limits quite differently on how we conceptualize our experiences of the world. Consequently, linguistic variations reflect variations in thought, worldviews, and mindsets. The idea of linguistic determinism, proved to be a provocative claim that inclined researchers to reject it. However, the weak Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been confirmed in many respects (for a review see C. Hardin/ M. R. Banaji 1993, T. Regier et al. 2010). Beyond the early anthropological observations, within- and cross-language studies have demonstrated experimentally a linguistic effect in perception-related behavioural data (when categorizing colours – P. Kay/ W. Kempton 1984), in short and long term memory performance (retention, schematisation – F.C. Bartlett 1932), and in memory reconstruction (E.F. Loftus/ J.C. Palmer 1974). It was also present when estimating memory capacity (N.C. Ellis/ R.A. Hennely 1980, M. Naveh-Benjamin/ T.J. Ayres 1986), in problem solving (E. Hunt/ F. Agnoli 1991), in between-cultural differences in math performance (K.F. Miller/ D.R. Parades 1996), or in social cognition (C. Hoffmann et al. 1986). The primary aim of the present study was not to provide argument or evidence against or in favour of the relativist hypothesis. Instead, we intended to investigate empirically a question that is related to the problem of linguistic relativity which may contribute to a better understanding of the complex interrelationship between language, thought and culture: How would a bilingual person characterise her-/himself using a language different from her/his mother tongue? The linguistic sensitivity of cultural-national self-characterization of bilinguals is the basic problem of the present study.

2. Bilingualism

Bilingualism is a prominent field of research on linguistic influence (e.g. T.K. Au 1983, Y. Takano 1989). Bilinguals do not form homogeneous groups, as they differ in terms of proficiency, method of acquisition, degree of emotional/motivational involvement and context of usage (T. Polonyi/ A. Kovács 2005). Accordingly,

defining bilingualism is extremely difficult, as all these factors should be considered. The definition of F. Grosjean (1992), however, is widely accepted in the field: bilingual people are the ones who need to use two or more languages during their everyday life according to their communicative and socio-cultural needs (orally and/or in writing, or even as a sign language), however, they very often do not speak both languages on the same high level (e.g. F. Grosjean 2008, 2010). Although it is wise to talk about continuity instead of dichotomy in many clustering areas, bilingual people can be classified along various dimensions (C. Bartha 1999):

1. Competence level of the two languages (balanced or dominant bilingualism)
2. Cognitive structure of bilingualism (compound, coordinate or subordinate structure)
3. Time and method of acquisition (early - simultaneous or successive – and late bilingualism; natural or controlled situation of language learning)
4. Presence or absence of support from the respective language community (endogen or exogen bilingualism)
5. Status of the two languages compared to one another (additive versus subtractive bilingualism)
6. Awareness of group membership and cultural identity

Regarding our research, the latter category is of utmost importance. The literature differentiates among bicultural (dual awareness of group membership and dual cultural identity), monocultural (awareness of single group membership and cultural identity), acculturational (awareness of belonging to the majority and taking over its cultural identity) and enculturational bilingualism (ambivalence regarding group membership and identity). In sum, bilingualism and multiculturalism do not necessarily go hand in hand, people may take part in the lives of two or more cultures on different levels. Thus, self-determination is influenced not only by bilingualism by itself, but also by knowing and/or belonging to two or more cultures. The basic question of this research project was whether multilingualism and multiculturalism have an impact on the person's cultural identity as well as on the way he or she sees or perceives his or her own culture.

3. Present study

Instead of the frequently investigated language-cognition interaction, cultural-national self-characterisation of bilinguals was examined. We adopted a quasi-experimental approach. Individual differences in cultural preferences were surveyed by using well-known questionnaires measuring: (a) the individual level of national identification (Collective Self-Esteem, CSE); (b) own-culture preference (Patriotism); and, (c) ethnocentric proclivity toward other cultures (Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale). Furthermore, individual differences in value priorities were also investigated with a questionnaire measuring (d) the relative importance of 10 universal value types (Portrait Values Questionnaire). In order to reveal a possible linguistic sensitivity of self-characterization, the linguistic context of the survey was manipulated. Following a translation protocol, three equivalent linguistic versions of the questionnaires and scales (Hungarian, Romanian, English) were developed. The language of the

questionnaire was manipulated between subjects, and according to the language of the filling the participants were grouped into three groups. All of the participants possessed a linguistic competence in more than one language, and because of multicultural living conditions, they were also well immersed in different cultures. Owing to this, the cross-language comparisons we conducted are supposedly free – at least to some extent – from the issues arising from cultural differences (see C. Hardin/M.R. Banaji 1993, Y. Takano 1989). The Hungarian language was the mother tongue for all of the participants (native language), English was considered as a neutral language, and, in regard to the possibility of ambivalent cultural attachment to the Romanian culture, the Romanian language was termed as majority group language.

As for the hypotheses, by default, a questionnaire or other psychological tool that have been adapted through a well-defined translation protocol into a new language, is expected to work in a similar way in both linguistic contexts. Accordingly, when an appropriate sample size is assured, no contextual (including linguistic) effect, i.e. group differences, should be expected on the values and ratings of the scales. If however, the cultural-national self-characterisation is sensitive to the linguistic (i.e., implicitly cultural-national) context of the data-collection, then a group difference will be expected across language groups in the collective identity relevant measurements (CSE, Ethnocentrism and Patriotism scales) but not necessarily in the personal value questionnaire.

4. Methods

Participants

The participants of the study were secondary school pupils living in Romania. All participants' nationality was Hungarian. They were 16–19 years old (average age: 17,6 years, SD=0.65). All participants learned in their mother tongue, i.e. in Hungarian, and they also learned the official language of the country, Romanian (4–5 classes a week), and a foreign language, English (5–6 classes a week). Thus, alongside language learning, they got familiar with the Romanian culture, customs and traditions. The study was carried out in three theoretical high schools in Odorheiu-Secuiesc, Harghita County. We assigned the students into three groups according to the language they filled in the questionnaires.

- Hungarian – 86 (33 boys, 53 girls)
- English – 65 (25 boys, 40 girls)
- Romanian – 86 (34 boys, 52 girls)

Materials

The individual importance of national/cultural group-membership was measured with modified versions of well-known scales. The usual back-translation protocol was followed to adopt each scale from English either to Hungarian or Romanian: first, the scales were translated to the respective language, then they were translated back to the original language by an independent translator. The Hungarian and Romanian scales were finalized by comparing and cross-checking the original and back-translated English versions of the scales.

Measuring collective self-esteem

The *Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE)* (R. Luhtanen/ J. Crocker 1992; see also S. Fiske 2003) was used to measure the extent to which participants build their social identity and self-esteem on the identification level with their own cultural group. The CSE scale measures the evaluation of the ingroup, as well as the power this evaluation has in the formation of self-esteem, on 4 subscales, and with each subscale containing 4 items. Items of the *Membership Self-Esteem* subscale measure to what extent an individual considers himself or herself a good and valuable group member (e.g. "I am a worthy member of the Hungarian nation"). Items in the *Private Collective Self-Esteem* subscale capture the level to which somebody appreciates and values his or her own group membership (e.g., "I feel good about the Hungarian nation I belong to"). Items in the *Public Collective Self-Esteem* subscale measure the respondent's opinion about the way others judge his or her group (e.g. "Overall, others have a good opinion about Hungarians"). The *Importance to Identity* subscale measures the personal importance and the role that group membership has in determining the respondent's self-image (e.g., "In general, belonging to the Hungarian nation is an important part of my self-image"). Respondents could indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each item using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree".

Measuring ethnocentrism

The level of ethnocentric proclivity one has towards one's own cultural group can be determined by the 22-item *Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale (GENE)*, (J. W. Neuliep/ J.C. McCroskey 1997, J.W. Neuliep 2002). Ethnocentrism refers to an individual disposition with which a person tends to judge and evaluate the attitudes, values, and behaviours of another group, using the attitudes, values, and behaviours of his or her ingroup as standards. This ethnocentric proclivity is also present in the perception of the outgroup: attitudes, values, and behaviours as well as how the members of the outgroup are perceived to be disparate from the ingroup, and as a consequence, evaluated negatively (J.W. Neuliep 2002). Example items from the scale are, e.g., "My culture should be the role model for other cultures", "I do not trust people who are different", and "I respect the values and customs of other cultures" (the latter one is a reverse-scored item). Respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree". Accordingly, higher scores on this scale refer to a higher ethnocentric proclivity towards one's own cultural group (traditionally, 15 of the 22 items are taken into account when calculating the final scores).

Measuring patriotism

The *Patriotism* scale, measuring the level of national identification, the mere national self-categorization, that is the personal strength of national identity, was adopted from the work of K. Meier-Pesti and E. Kirchler (2003). Patriotism offers another way, in which ingroup-outgroup comparison tendencies and outgroup references are not

present, and as a result, the consequences of patriotism in building national pride do not extend the ingroup (A. Mummendey/ A. Klink/ R. Brown 2001). The original 11-item scale referred to the Austrian national group that was replaced by the Hungarian group. Respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = “*strongly disagree*” to 7 = “*strongly agree*”, on items for example: “I identify with Hungarian people”, “I hardly feel attached to the Hungarians” and “It means little to me to be a Hungarian” (the latter two items are reverse-scored).

Measuring personal value priorities

The personal emphases of different universal value types were measured with the shorter version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-21, E. Davidov 2008, S.H. Schwartz 1994, 2003, S.H. Schwartz et al. 2001). Value questionnaires are widely used for investigating factors influencing attitudes and behaviours in cross-cultural settings (e.g. P.W. Schultz/ L. C. Zelezny 1998) or cultural value orientations (e.g. S.H. Schwartz 2007). The PVQ differentiates 10 motivational value types that can be arranged along two bipolar dimensions. One of these two dimensions oppose self-enhancement to self-transcendence, that is, oppose the value types of *power* and *achievement* to the value types of *universalism* and *benevolence*, respectively. The other dimension opposes openness to change to conservation, that is, opposes the value types of *stimulation* and *self-direction* to the value types of *conformity*, *tradition* and *security*. The value type of *hedonism* can be related to an endpoint of both dimensions, as it can be related to both self-enhancement and openness to change (S. H. Schwartz 1994). The 21 items in the PVQ briefly portray different people attaching special importance to a wide variety of things. For instance, one of the items measuring the importance of tradition: “Tradition is important to him/her; She/he tries to follow the customs handed down by her religion or her family.” Respondents have to answer a similar question (“How much like you is this person?”) on a 6-point scale after every 2-sentence description (i.e., portray) ranging from 1 = *not like me at all* to 6 = *very much like me*.

5. Results

Collective self-esteem

First, a reliability analysis was performed. The alpha values we obtained for each subscale indicated a moderate level of reliability (Cronbach’s alphas > 0.63), but of most importance, the reliability level across language groups was approximately the same. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed with a fixed factor by Group (Hungarian vs. English vs. Romanian) for the CSE subscales (Membership Self-Esteem, Importance to Identity, Private and Public Collective Self-Esteem). A significant main effect of Group was found [Wilks’ lambda = 0.81; $F(8, 462) = 6.43$; $p < 0.001$] indicating differences in values between groups. To analyse the group differences, univariate tests were run for each of the subscales. Means on the Membership Self-Esteem, Importance to Identity, Private and Public Collective Self-Esteem subscales across the language groups are displayed in Figure 1 and 2.

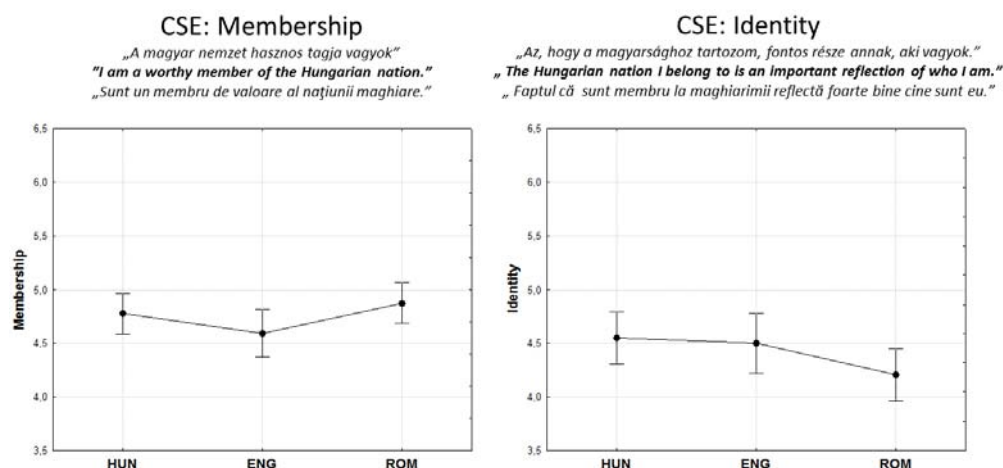


Figure 1. The average level of agreement with items on Membership Self-Esteem, Importance to Identity subscales of CSE in the three language groups (HUN: Hungarian; ENG: English; ROM: Romanian)

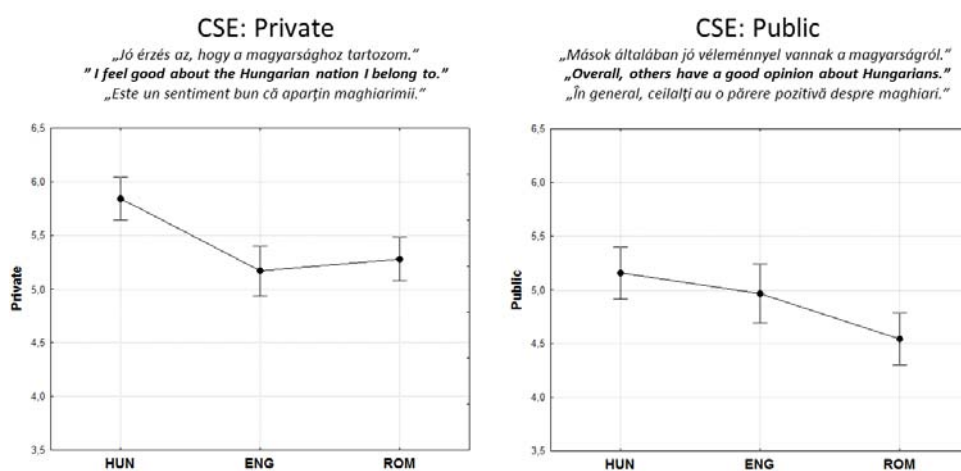


Figure 2. The average level of agreement with items on Private and Public Collective Self-Esteem subscales of CSE in the three language groups (HUN: Hungarian; ENG: English; ROM: Romanian)

In line with the pattern of data displayed on Figure 1, no significant differences were detected between language groups, nor on Membership Self-Esteem [$F(2,234)=1.88$; $p>0.05$], nor on Importance to Identity [$F(2,234)=2.22$; $p>0.05$] subscales. The null effect of Group clearly indicated that the language used on the questionnaire had no impact on the values of the subscales.

At first sight, group differences can be observed on the Private and Public Collective Self-Esteem subscale (Figure 2). In line with the impressions, statistical analyses revealed a significant difference between the groups both on Private

Collective Self-Esteem [$F(2,234)=11.75$; $p<0.001$] and on Public Collective Self-Esteem [$F(2,234)=6.7$; $p<0.001$] subscales. Post-Hoc analyses (Turkey) showed, that on the Private Collective Self-Esteem subscale, the mean of values was higher in the Hungarian groups as compared to the English or Romanian groups [t values > 3.91 ; $p<0.001$]. In slight contrast to this, on the Public Collective Self-Esteem subscale, the mean of the Romanian group was lower than that of the Hungarian [$t=3.59$; $p<0.001$] and English [$t=2.29$; $p<0.001$] group. The mean in the latter was approximately the same as in the Hungarian group [$t=1.04$; $p>0.05$].

In sum, the relatively high scores on each subscale indicated a considerable importance of the group and the group membership in terms of social self-esteem. This was shown in the level of self-evaluation as a member of the social group (Membership Self Esteem), as well as in the designated subjective importance of group membership for participants' identity (Importance to Identity). However, an effect of linguistic manipulation could not be observed on either of between-group comparisons. In contrast a linguistic effect was found in the data of the Private and Public Collective Self-Esteem subscales. The difference between the language groups on these subscales of the CSE implied that the participants' own culture evaluation from a personal point of view (Private CSE) may be enhanced in mother tongue, but the appreciation of group membership (Public CSE) may be attenuated when in a non-native language context an outer, but indefinite point of view (e.g. "others from the majority language group") was provided implicitly. These patterns of results indicated that the linguistic context may afford the respondents an implicit reference of some sort, when expressing perceived appreciations of the group on a scale.

Ethnocentrism and Patriotism

Cronbach's alphas were computed for the Ethnocentrism scale and for the Patriotism scale in each group separately. A high level of internal consistency for the Ethnocentrism scale was observed for the whole sample (0.79) and for each of the language groups (Hungarian: 0.78; English: 0.78; Romanian: 0.80). Following the deletion of an item from the Patriotism scale, the consistency index improved to the required level (0.80) for the whole sample, and it was high for each group as well (Hungarian: 0.87; English: 0.76; Romanian: 0.74). On the Ethnocentrism scale the values varied around the midpoint of the seven-point scale (mean: 3.03). On the Patriotism scale they were plotted out at a higher level (mean: 5.33). Group means on the Ethnocentrism and Patriotism scales across the language groups are displayed in Figure 3.

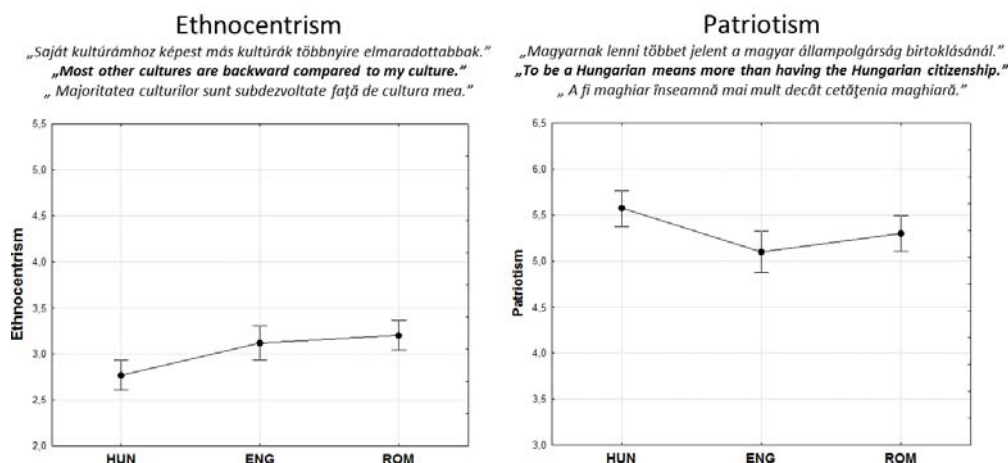


Figure 3. The average level of agreement with items on the Ethnocentrism and Patriotism scales in the three language groups (HUN: Hungarian; ENG: English; ROM: Romanian)

A MANOVA was performed with the fixed factor of Group (Hungarian vs. English vs. Romanian) for the Ethnocentrism and the Patriotism scale. A significant main effect of Group was found [Wilks' lambda = 0.884; $F(4, 466)=7.38$; $p<0.001$]. The group differences were analysed using univariate tests for each test separately. The effect of language (i.e. Group) on the Ethnocentrism scale reached the level of significance [$F(2, 234)=7.6$; $p<0.01$]. A post-hoc analysis revealed that this was due to the lower mean for Hungarian group as compared to English and Romanian groups ($p=0.017$ and 0.01 respectively). The Group effect proved to be significant again on the Patriotism scale [$F(2, 234)=5.14$; $p<0.01$]. The Post-hoc tests revealed that values in the Hungarian group were higher than in the remaining groups ($p<0.01$ and $p=0.05$). No group differences were found between the Romanian and English groups in either of the scales.

In sum, a considerable linguistic effect on the level of participants' own cultural preference had been demonstrated on both scales. On the Patriotism scale, where the cultural preference needs to be expressed without any explicit comparison the scores in the native language group indicated an enhanced patriotic attitude. On the Ethnocentrism scale, where the cultural preference is evaluated with a direct between-cultural comparison, the participants inclined to elevate the preference of the culture of their own over that of others in a non-native language context. These patterns of results may be understood as an indication of elevated cultural preference in mother tongue, or attenuated bias in non-native languages. The observed language context effect on patriotism and ethnocentrism, consistent with the pattern observed on the Private and Public subscales of CSE, indicated that an implicit cultural reference afforded by the non-native linguistic context may lead respondents to overrate or overvalue their own culture (i.e. expressing a more positive attitude).

Portrait Values Questionnaire

Analysing value priorities on a personal level, a relative preference score for each value type was computed in two steps. First, the mean responses to all items of the PVQ as well as to the 10 subscales (values) were calculated for each respondent. Second, value priority scores for all 10 values were computed for each respondent by subtracting the total mean of the PVQ items from the means of the subscales (i.e., the mean scores of values were centered around the mean of all 21 items). As a result, a relative preference index emerged (Mean: 0.053 Min.: -3.19; Max.: 3.48), displaying the relative importance of an individual value as compared to the averaged importance level (represented by 0). The value profile based on the preference scores for the 10 values is portrayed in Figure 4 for the three language groups.

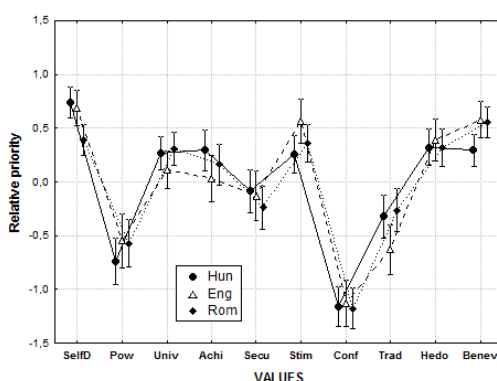


Figure 4. The relative importance of the respective value type (SelfD: self-direction; Pow: power; Univ: universalism; Achi: achievement; Secu: security; Stim: stimulation; Conf: conformity; Trad: tradition; Hedo: hedonism; Benev: benevolence) in the three language groups (HUN: Hungarian; ENG: English; ROM: Romanian)

As Figure 4 illustrates nicely, a moderate variability of the preference scores can be observed along the 10 PVQ values indicating slight individual differences in value priorities. A detailed analyses of the pattern we noticed is beyond the aims of the present article. In order to test the effect of linguistic manipulation, a MANOVA was performed with the fixed factor of Group (Hungarian vs. English vs. Romanian) for each of the PVQ scales. A significant main effect of Group was found [Wilks' lambda = 0.816; $F(20, 450)=2.41$; $p<0.01$] indicating differences in group means. As can be seen in Figure 4, the patterns of scores overlapped almost completely across the three groups. However, a Group effect was found in Self-direction, in Benevolence and in the Tradition scales [F values (2, 234) > 2.03; p 's < 0.001].

In sum, as expected, no linguistic effect appeared on the level of personal values, and almost a complete overlap was found between the value profiles of the three language groups. These pattern of results suggested that the self-characterization on the basis of personal values was supposedly insensitive to the linguistic context. It should be remarked, that one of the values on which group differences emerged,

tradition, has an inherent, collectivistic connotation. From this perspective, the language effect seemed not to be surprising at all.

6. Testing the language comprehension

It seemed reasonable to ask whether the participants in the non-native language groups were able to properly understand the questionnaires they were presented with. The participants were asked to answer two additional, native-language questions at the end of the survey. They were asked to indicate, by using a seven-point scale, to what extent they understood the questions (“not at all” ... “absolutely”), and the extent of the differences in understanding between them and an imaginary native speaker (“no difference” ... “great, great difference”). The results showed that participants in non-native groups did understand the questionnaires at about a “good” level (mean: 5.2), but they were aware that a native speaker would be able to understand the questions better to “some extent” than they did (mean: 4.6).

7. General discussion

In the present study a possible linguistic effect on self-characterization was investigated among bilinguals living in specific multicultural circumstances. Our persons of interest were Hungarians by their ethnic origin, for whom Hungarian was the mother tongue, but who still possessed a comparable linguistic competence in Romanian and English. The students participated in a questionnaire study in which they were asked to indicate numerically the degree of agreement with simple statements by using seven-point scales (ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’), or to evaluate the extent of their similarity to an imaginary person (ranging from ‘very much like me’ to ‘not like me at all’). Our question was simple and straightforward: what would happen when the language of the questionnaires was different than the respondent’s mother tongue? Should we expect different answers, i.e., differences in scale values, when a Hungarian person responds using English or Romanian? Do answers to questions of a self-characterization questionnaire depend on the language by which we think of ourselves, that is, the language we think by? Intuitively, the answer would be no. However, we supposed that a linguistic context may have an effect on self-characterization in a linguistic version of a questionnaire that contains collective attributes, i.e., that can be interpreted inherently from a linguistic-cultural point of view. For example, characteristics related to a person’s collective-national identity are collective by their very nature. To our hypothesis, identity relevant questions, providing a specific linguistic-cultural perspective, are sensitive to linguistic influences. In order to test this broadly outlined hypotheses we selected questionnaires and scales that are accepted to be measures of aspects of national/cultural identity (Collective Self-Esteem Scale, Patriotism, Ethnocentrism). By contrast, we tested the hypothesized linguistic effect using a personal value scale (PVQ) that deals with personal preferences and priorities, that are not in close relation with national-cultural identity. The questionnaires and scales we used in this study are standardized, widely employed methods, in relation with a variety of research

questions (see J. Kovács et al. 2011, J. Kovács et al. 2013, S. H. Schwartz 2007, P.W. Schultz/ L.C. Zelezny 1998). For our purposes, equivalent linguistic versions of the questionnaires and scales were developed following the protocol. We translated the items into Hungarian or Romanian and then we compared a re-translated version with the original one. Three groups were formed, a native (Hungarian), a neutral (English) and a majority (Romanian) language group. Assuming a shifting in a cultural-linguistic perspective stemming from the language manipulation, differences in scale values were predicted across the language groups eminently in questionnaires that measured cultural-national identity. In contrast, no group difference, i.e., null effect of language manipulation was expected in the personal value questionnaire. This pattern of results were hypothesized to be a demonstration of a linguistic effect on self-characterization.

In line with our expectations, remarkable group differences were obtained in the scale values indicating a linguistic effect. Significant group differences emerged on the majority of the collective-identity related scales, specifically when the native language group was compared with either the neutral, or the majority language group. That was the case for the Public and Private Collective Self-Esteem subscales of the CSE scale. On these scales, when using a preferred, mother tongue for indicating the importance of the group, and the group membership from an inner (private) or an outer (public) point of view, the scale values were higher than in any other language group.

Similar was the case for the Patriotism and Ethnocentrism scales. When expressing the participants personal appreciation of their own group per se (patriotic attitude), or in comparison with other groups (ethnocentric attitude), the mother tongue has an impact, setting the native language group apart from one or both of the other language groups. In a possible explanation two important aspects need to be emphasized. We suspected, as we have mentioned in the previous paragraphs, that the language of the questionnaire response may afford an implicit frame of reference for the evaluation of the self, the own-group and the self-group relations. From a specific cultural-linguistic perspective, the culture of our own group (or the group of our own) may conceivably be the subject of an implicit social comparison (what and how other people or groups may perceive us or the culture of our own?). Such a modified point of view, where the perspective may be shaped by the language may have an effect on how a person perceives and thinks of his/her national/cultural relations and on how she/he expresses her/his agreement with identity relevant statements. This explanation would be in line with social psychological research findings showing that an activated (i.e., more accessible) cultural identity shapes identity-relevant self-characterizations, choices, and decisions (R.A. LeBoeuf/ E. Shafir/ J.B. Bayuk 2010, D. Trafimow/ H.C. Triandis/ S.G. Goto 1991, O. Ybarra/ D. Trafimow 1998). The second aspect of our explanation is that the shifting of the perspective may probably invoke emotional reactions. Whether it may be explicit or implicit, in an emotionally well-saturated context of possible pure cognitive classifications, decisions (“yes, agree”, “yes, like me”) may turn into affective classifications and decisions (“sure, I certainly agree!”, “not at all, I do not agree!”) leading to elevated scale values.

No effect of language manipulation could be observed on CSE Importance to Identity and Membership Self-Esteem subscales. These scales concerned with the collectivistic aspect of self-esteem, but the group-membership and its importance and value was emphasized from a personal point of view („for me it is important ...”). In line with this, it was found that about the same ratings of values occurred in the native and non-native language groups on the data of the Portrait Value Questionnaire, and, with three exceptions, there was not a notable effect of language manipulation on value preferences. The null effect of language manipulation may indicate, when expressing an aspect of the personal identity, or personally respected values, a shift in perspective and therefore, emotional re-priming induced by the linguistic context probably could not play a role. The linguistic context may have an effect only when perceiving, expressing and evaluating collective aspects (i.e., collective identity relevant) of personal values. This explanation may be in line with a variety of demonstrations of enhanced cultural bias (own culture bias, ingroup favoritism, own culture preference) discussed in studies using explicit measures (Y.R. Chen/ J. Brockner/ X.P. Chen 2002, Y.R. Chen/ J. Brockner/ T. Katz 1998) or in implicit attitude research (see Z. Kondé et al. 2011, B.A. Nosek et al. 2007, O. Ogunnaike et al. 2010). The present observations may give support to the supposition that social preferences (including cultural/national bias) may be mediated by emotional processes, and in light of this, we find that this contribution emphasizes the role of language in creating emotional context (e.g. K.D. Kinzler/ E. Dupoux/ E.S. Spelke 2007).

8. Linguistic relativity in identity relevant self-characterization?

In the introductory part of this paper, the issue of linguistic relativity has been mentioned, summarizing the idea that the language, or the linguistic context may have an influencing effect on the way of thinking and the prospect for cognition. Different languages may represent the world in many different ways, therefore available linguistic 'resources' offer both a possibility and at the same time impose a constraint for cognition. In the present research we pursued a similar question: Does possessing a competence to think in the frame of two or more languages lead to different ways of thinking when using one language or the other? Or at least, will using one language change our attitudes or settings toward the world, or ourselves compared to what we have in another language? Observing the group effects that we obtained, we have a good reason to believe that these differences are of significant consequence to the factors we manipulated, i.e. the language of questionnaire response. Consequently, on the basis of the present observations, the linguistic context can be acknowledged as an influential factor of respondents' "questionnaire filling behaviour", when, at least, different aspects of identity are concerned.

However, it would be premature to conclude that the language effect indicated a causal relationship between the linguistic context and the person's self-characterization demonstrating a kind of linguistic relativity. Due to the between-subject design of the present study, there is some chance that the observed group differences reflect differences in participants' original attitudes, opinions toward the

topics surveyed, and it is a matter of attitude differences rather than merely a linguistic effect. Although the sample size was chosen to have enough statistical power, for the time being, we are cautious about drawing inferences. We are preparing a second phase of data collection involving the very same groups of participants. In the repeated, half-year delayed investigation, half of the participants are asked to fill in the same questionnaires while the language of the filling remains the same. For the other half, the language of the filling is changing, either from the mother tongue to either of the non-native languages, or from a foreign language back to the native language. An effect of language shifting in a within-subject comparison is expected to be similar to the result of between-subject comparisons observed in the present study.

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