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Attitudes Toward German Loanwords in Zagreb

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ABSTRACT German loanwords are one of the hallmarks of the Zagreb city dialect. During the last decades, a receding trend can be observed, but it was only covered by a handful of empirical studies. The aim of this paper is to examine the extent of the trend and to examine implicit and explicit attitudes towards German loanwords, as possible triggers of the perceived shift. Moreover, we investigated the possible origins for the change in attitudes, notably the age of the speakers and their linguistic background, as a function of their regional ties. The focus of the study is primarily the attitudes that the speakers of the Zagreb variety of Croatian themselves have towards this feature of their own dialect, but we also compared them with speakers of other varieties. Our results show that the receding trend is real and mostly founded on generational differences. While the older Zagrebians still perceive the German loanwords as features of a fully functional dialectal variety with relatively high overt prestige, for the younger generation, they are merely a warm and endearing token of their heritage, as well as a symbol of their regional origin and belonging. However, they still manage to keep their covert prestige.

Key words: German loanwords, Status vs. Solidarity, Zagreb dialect, matched-guise task, language attitudes.

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1. Introduction

Linguistic attitudes play a central role in the complex relationship between language, identity and society. The beginnings of their scientific consideration can be found in the boom period of systematic structuralist language research, though a significant breakthrough came with the emergence of the matched-guise method (Hoenigswald, 2015; Labov, 1966; Lambert et al., 1960). After that, in the 1990s, enthusiasm and curiosity were somewhat suppressed due to the methodological limitations of existing methods (Dragojevic et al., 2021; Giles, 2022). However, thanks to methodological innovations, in particular mixed methods approaches (Ryan et al., 1988), the bottlenecks of old methods have been eliminated (Johnson et al., 2007; Kircher & Hawkey, 2022; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), enabling the exploration of large datasets (Feng et al., 2024; Wei, 2019), so this field of research is enjoying renewed popularity (Giles, 2022). To date, there have been numerous studies with different foci (Kircher & Zipp, 2022b, p. xv).

The concept of attitudes belongs primarily to social psychology (Katz, 1960; Schwarz & Bohner, 2001; Smith et al., 1956), in which tradition attitudes are usually described as feelings of liking or disliking towards various psychological objects (Coronel-Molina, 2009; Edwards, 1957). They encompass feelings, thoughts and behavioural patterns derived from them - *affect*, *cognition* and *conation* (Baker, 1992; Garrett, 2010; Rosenberg et al., 1960). Kircher and Zipp (2022a, p. 3) add, on top of this, that attitudes, including linguistic ones, are socially constructed and acquired through experience, or, in other words, developed along with other socially based concepts. Consequently, language itself, as an essential part of our identity, is subject to beliefs and attitudes, as well as our behavioural patterns. Language allows us to recognise 'our own' as well as 'others'. Many authors (Dragojevic et al., 2021; Krausneker, 2015) argue that attitudes towards a linguistic variety cannot be separated from attitudes towards its speakers. They are also reflections of social conventions and preferences, which are reflected in the status and prestige of the speakers of different varieties (Edwards, 1957).

Crucially, attitudes towards languages or linguistic varieties are never based on inherent linguistic characteristics, but rather on the social meanings attributed to them. Cargile et al. (1994, p. 227) argue that assessments of other linguistic varieties are linked to symbolic associations that these varieties carry within a society, such as status, prestige or appropriateness. Giles et al. (1974) reached the same conclusion, who refute the hypothesis of *inherent value* and emphasise the validity of the *imposed norm*.

One of the central dichotomies in research on linguistic attitudes is the distinction between Status (*Competence, Utility*) and Solidarity (*Warmth, Approachability*). Assessments of status are mostly associated with power, economic opportunities, and social advancement (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Kircher & Zipp, 2022a). In contrast, the

dimension of Solidarity is more closely associated with connectedness, belonging and group identification, from which Ryan et al. (1988, p. 9) conclude that one's own linguistic variety represents the 'group with which one identifies'. Woolard (1989) notes that the match-guise experiments examine precisely these two axes of evaluation.

The matched-guise technique (MGT) was long the most important method for eliciting linguistic attitudes (Lambert et al., 1960, 1975). It was used to investigate various language characteristics (Loureiro-Rodríguez & Acar, 2022). Of course, the method has also been criticised since its introduction, and innovations have been proposed: Buchstaller (2006), for example, citing Preston (2010) and Sachs et al. (1973), notes that auditory stimuli inevitably contain a range of suprasegmental, phonemic, and prosodic elements that can evoke unintended associations, such as gender or regional origins. She also shows that reading tasks, combined with contextual variations, can more efficiently isolate individual features. Dragojevic et al. (2021, p. 5) discuss methodological improvements for the design of stimuli, as an extension of an earlier proposal by Coupland and Bishop (2007).

In this paper, we examine the attitudinal facet of the loss of German loanwords (GLW) in the linguistic variety of the city of Zagreb across different generations. Once a prominent feature of the Zagreb variety of Croatian language (Glovacki-Bernardi, 1998, 2013, 2017; Šojat et al., 1998; Štebih Golub & Novak, 2015; Žepić, 1995, 2002), they gradually lose their position within the dialect, as shown in a few limited-scope papers (Tepeš Golubić, 2022; Velički et al., 2009; Županović Filipin, 2015).

2. Aim, research questions and hypotheses

The present study aims to examine the evaluation of German loanwords (GLW) in the Zagreb variety of Croatian and its potential role in their observed decline by young speakers. As already stated, the task is not trivial: attitudes towards loanwords are difficult to distinguish from attitudes towards the language variety and towards the speakers themselves (Dragojevic et al., 2021). To perform this task, we intended to explore whether cognitive attitudes about GLW in Zagreb conflict with the affective attachment to them and whether the interaction between these two dimensions could explain the observed linguistic shift. We therefore propose the following research questions:

> RQ1: How do different generations of Croatian speakers, especially speakers of the Zagreb variety themselves, evaluate GLW compared to standard Croatian equivalents?
>
> RQ2: What social meanings (*indexicalities*, cf. Coupland & Bishop 2007, p. 74) do the participants from different age groups and linguistic backgrounds (Formative Years Region) ascribe to the GLW?

In search of the answers to the proposed questions, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: According to the Imposed Norm Hypothesis and related to the Status dimension (Giles et al., 1974), all participants, regardless of their age and linguistic background, will evaluate standard words (SW) higher than GLW. Since the standard variety is promoted through education and media as the *best* and *correct* way of speaking (Kircher & Zipp, 2022a, p. 21), we can expect that all speakers have adopted the standard variety as the most appropriate for helping them achieve their status-related goals, such as upward social mobility and income.

H2: With their history as a symbol of Zagreb urban identity, GLW will still achieve higher ratings on the Solidarity/Warmth dimension than SW, with differences between age groups and language backgrounds.

H3: The emotional attachment to GLW (Solidarity/Warmth dimension) will be significantly weaker for the younger generation.

H4: Based on the language spoken in the family during the formative years, i.e. in the language acquisition period, the region where the person spent this time of their life will significantly influence their explicit beliefs about identity, which will be visible from their answers to the direct questions, but not on implicit ratings (matched-guise task).

The current evaluation values of GLW on the two dimensions (Status and Solidarity) between different age and regional groups should enable us to articulate possible reasons for their decline. We expect them to still hold some of their affective value, at least for speakers with a Zagreb regional background. However, they might lose value on the Status dimension, and this diminished utilitarian value could in turn drive further shifts in the language behaviour of the speakers. If this proves true, the current loss of value could lead to further erosion of their vitality.

To address these questions, we adopted a design with two complementary approaches, a direct one (four multi-item question batteries) and an indirect one (a written matched-guise task). The chosen design enables us to compare how GLW are assessed across both the Status and Solidarity dimensions and provides a glimpse into the link between attitudes and language behaviour. Additionally, the matched-guise task allows us to disentangle, as far as possible, evaluations of the observed phenomenon itself from evaluations of its speakers.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

Using the SurveyMonkey platform, we collected the answers from 360 participants from all parts of Croatia, focusing primarily on participants from the city of Zagreb. The participation was only allowed after a participant confirmed they were over 18 years old and gave their consent to anonymously participate in the survey. All were native speakers of Croatian, recruited first by the snowball sampling method (Kircher, 2022, p. 139) and later among students from the Department of Phonetics at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Students were encouraged to engage more participants.

In addition to the usual demographic questions (gender, highest education level attained), other relevant demographic information gathered comprises information about the age (Young N=170, Middle N=140, Older N=50), region where the person spent their linguistically most important formative years (approximately until 20 years of age – 9 categories by Croatian regions with distinct dialects – „Region"), where one of their parents spent their linguistically formative years and where the other of the parents spent the same years. The information about parents' formative years was collected to gain insight into the language of the parental home, which can exert an important influence on the linguistic development of individuals (Anđel, in press).

3.2. Materials

The linguistic part of the questionnaire consisted of 5 multi-item batteries, whose reliability was confirmed using the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EPA – polychoric correlation). All statistical analyses were performed using the JASP software (JASP Team, 2025). Furthermore, the questions could be divided into direct (four multi-item batteries - Situations, Occupations, Explicit Attitudes, Explicit Attitudes of Participants from Zagreb) and indirect (one multi-item question, presented as a matched-guise task) (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Garrett et al., 2003; Ryan et al., 1988). The linguistic questions were randomised to avoid order effects.

a) Direct questions – multi-item batteries

Direct questions were organised into four multi-item batteries: one asking about possible situations in which people might use GLW, the second asking whether people in specific occupations might be more or less prone to use them, the third explicitly asking about participants' attitudes towards GLW, and a fourth with explicit questions, but directed specifically towards participants with a Zagreb-related background.

Question 1 – Situations. The instruction directed the participants to choose the likelihood that someone who regularly uses GLW would use them in specific situations. They were offered the following situations: At the bank, at school/work, as a guest on the evening news of the national broadcaster, when approached on the street by a local TV journalist asking about a local issue, with friends, or with family. The EFA grouped the first four into one factor (Formal), and the remaining two into the other (Informal usage). The participants were then directed to choose one of the following options between certainly not (1) and certainly yes (5).

Question 2 – Occupations. Participants were asked whether they could imagine someone in a specific occupation using GLW. The occupations presented were: construction worker, nurse, shop assistant, pharmacist, architect, tram driver, and clerk. The possible answers were from 1 (cannot imagine), over hardly imagine, don't know and can imagine, to 5 (easily imagine). The construction worker, tram driver and shop assistant factored into blue-collar roles, and the remainder into white-collar roles.

Question 3 – Explicit questions for all participants, regardless of their regional background. The questions were: 1. It is important to speak „pure" Croatian without loanwords. 2. Knowing German loanwords helps me communicate with family members. 3. German loanwords make communication livelier. 4. German loanwords should be used less in Zagreb. 5. Usage of German loanwords signals lower education. 6. German loanwords are a natural part of the Zagreb language variety. 7. I prefer hearing German to English loanwords in Zagreb. 8. German loanwords are mainly used by the elderly. Sentences 2 and 7 were grouped as representing the dimension of Status (Utility), and sentences 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were grouped as expressions of the dimension of Solidarity. Sentence Nr 8 was found unique and analysed separately. The rating scale was from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Question 4 – Explicit questions for participants with strong ties to Zagreb (Formative Years Region = Zagreb). The questions asked were: 1. German loanwords are an expression of my identity. 2. I hesitate to use German loanwords in formal situations. 3. I feel mocked by others when using German loanwords. No factorial grouping was found.

The scale used was the same as for Question 3.

b) Indirect question – the matched-guise task

Guided by methodological concerns about the matched-guise task already discussed in the introduction part, and inspired by the approach presented in Buchstaller (2006), we implemented an adapted, written/read matched-guise task to explore attitudes of native speakers of Croatian towards GLW in the Zagreb variety. Participants were asked to make a forced-choice rating on a series of semantic differential tasks about

a presented sentence. However, each participant was exposed to only one of the four possible written variants (or *guises*, hence the name of the task): two different sentences, each in two linguistic guises, one containing GLW, and the other containing only their standard counterparts.

Iz birtije kod Kvatrića gledamo frajera koji tanka benzin na pumpi. (GLW)

Iz kafića kod Kvatrića gledamo čovjeka koji toči gorivo na benzinskoj crpki. (SW)

(Meaning of both: From a coffee shop on Kvaternikov trg, we are watching a man refuel his car at the petrol station.)

Blizu novog stana na Jarunu imamo plac, vrtić, školu i apoteku. (GLW)

Blizu novog stana na Jarunu imamo tržnicu, vrtić, školu i ljekarnu. (SW)

Meaning of both: Near our new flat in Jarun, we have a market, kindergarten and pharmacy.)

The rationale for exposing participants to different content and linguistic guises was to neutralise the effect of potential personal attitudes toward the content of the sentences. Using the names of well-known localities in Zagreb in both instances should have primed them towards the linguistic choices presented in the sentences. What remained should only have been their attitudes towards reading a German loanword.

After reading one of the four random sentences, the participants were asked to rate the author of the sentence along the following opposed adjective pairs: *funny-serious, distanced-intimate, unintelligent-intelligent, unlikable-likeable, disingenuous-natural, stiff-relaxed, old-young, humourless-witty, unkind-kind, traditional-modern*. The semantic differential questions asked were the following: Not considering the content, but only the language of the following utterance, how would you rate the person who made it? The ratings offered were from -2 (the first word excellently describes the person) to 2 (the second word excellently describes the person). For the data collection, some pairs were presented in reverse order. For the analysis, all were counted in the order of polarisation, from negative towards positive and the ratings were converted to a scale from 1 to 5.

c) Sociodemographic questionnaire

The survey also included some usual sociodemographic questions, such as gender, education, and exposure to foreign languages. However, especially relevant to the present paper, we also asked about the age of the participants, as well as the region where they spent their formative years (until 20 years of age), which is important to assess the exposure to GLW during their process of language acquisition. We also asked about the region where one of the parents spent their formative years, and the region where the other parent spent their formative years, which could allow us to further stratify participants with a Zagreb background. However, due to length constraints, only a subset of results can be presented here.

3.3. Analysis

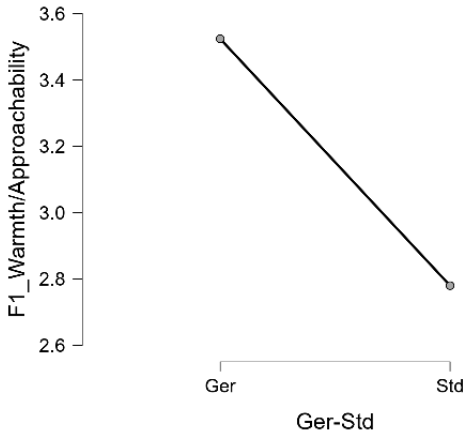
As already noted, to ensure the statistical validity of our measures, all multi-item scales were first submitted to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using polychoric correlations, since the ratings are discrete (ordinal) Likert-type.

The resulting factor scores were further analysed as the dependent variables in a series of Standard Linear Regression models (LRM). This approach enabled us to make predictions about the independent variables of Age and Region in which the participants spent their linguistically formative years ("Region"). All analyses except for the matched-guise task (MGT) were conducted on a wide-format dataset (N=360 for all and N=241 for one multi-item battery), with MGT analyses performed on long-format data.

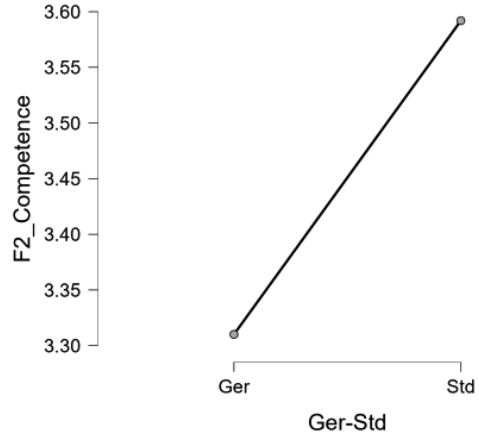
3.3.1. Implicit Evaluations: The matched-guise task

The LRM for the first factor of the MTG, the Solidarity (Warmth/Approachability) factor reveals that the linguistic guise (GLW vs. SW) was the strongest predictor of social evaluation ($R^2 = .22, F(5, 2514) = 142.1, p < .001$). Specifically, across the sample, the SW were rated significantly lower than the GLW version ($B = -0.744, p < .001, 95\%\ CI = [-0.800, -0.688]$). This result suggests that GLW still carry strong covert prestige in Croatia. Age appears as a significant secondary predictor for warmth, with both older ($B = 0.257, p < .001, 95\%\ CI = [0.163, 0.351]$) and middle-aged participants ($B = 0.123, p < .001, 95\%\ CI = [0.061, 0.184]$) evaluating the speakers more favourably than the younger generation. This result indicates that, despite the strong position of the GL on the Solidarity dimension in older and middle-aged participants, this connection loses its strength in the younger generation. In contrast, the model for Status (Competence) showed reversed results: the SW were significantly higher than the GLW guise ($B = 0.282, p < .001, 95\%\ CI = [0.226, 0.338]$). This confirms the 'imposed norm hypothesis,' where the standard variety is recognised as the language of education and success across the sample. The results for the Zagreb cohort do not significantly differ from the national evaluation.

Graph 1.
Marginal effects of guise on F1 Solidarity/Warmth



Graph 2.
Marginal effects of guise on F2 Status/Competence

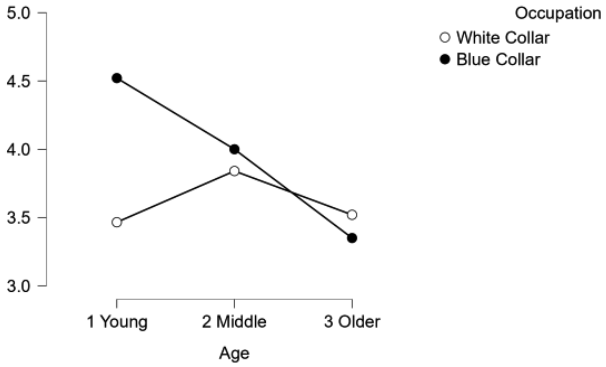


3.3.2. Social Stereotypes: Associations with Occupations

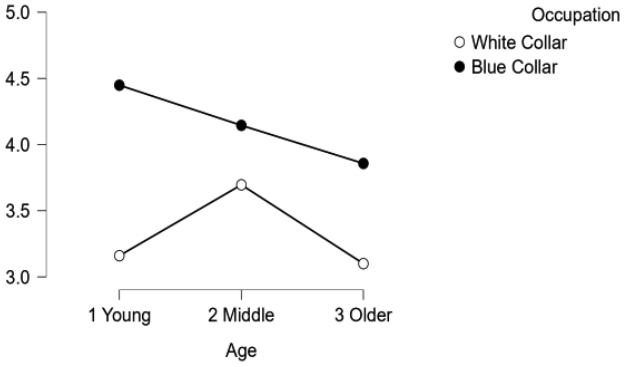
EFA confirmed that the eight occupations can be divided into two distinct social dimensions: White-Collar (higher prestige - Professor, Architect, Nurse, Clerk and Pharmacist) and Blue-Collar (e.g., Tram Driver, Construction Worker, Shop Assistant). Results for the White-Collar factor showed a significant inverted U-curve by age. Middle-aged participants were significantly more likely to associate GLW with high-status professions than the younger generation (*B = 0.425, p < .001, 95% CI = [0.243, 0.606]*), a belief also significantly predicted by growing up in Zagreb (*p = .010*), similarly to growing up in the Zagreb Region (*p = .018*).

For Blue-Collar occupations, the model showed a sharp decline across generations ($R^2 = .152$, $p < .001$). The youngest generation has the strongest cognitive association between GLW and lower-status work, whereas middle-aged ($B = -0.394$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-0.552, -0.237]) and older participants ($B = -0.844$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-1.084, -0.603]) view this connection as significantly weaker.

Graph 3.
Associations of GLW in Zagreb variety with Occupations, Only participants from Zagreb, mean rating (look "from within")



Graph 4.
Associations of GLW in Zagreb variety with Occupations, participants from elsewhere in Croatia, mean rating (look "from without")

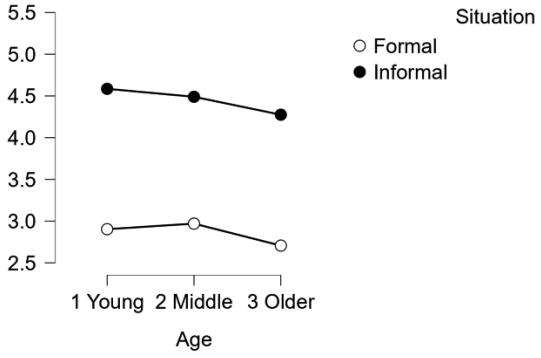


3.3.3. Situational Usage: Functional Domains

Participants distinguish clearly between formal and informal situations for the use of GLW. While the probability of use in formal domains (e.g., in a bank or on the news, even on informal programs) is low ($M = 2.91$) and shows no significant predictors, the use of GLW is highly favoured in informal situations (e.g., with family or friends, $M = 4.51$). Interestingly, older participants report a significantly lower probability of using

GLW in informal settings than the young (*B = -0.324, p = .010, 95% CI = [-0.569, -0.080]*), suggesting that the younger generation may perceive GLW as more appropriate for casual 'slang' than the older generations, who view them through a different lens, still perceiving it as a multifunctional dialect, useful in other settings, despite its lower status utility. Once again, the speakers from Zagreb do not differ significantly from the rest of the sample.

Graph 5.
Acceptability ratings for the use of German loanwords by the formality of a situation, mean



3.3.4. Explicit Beliefs: Solidarity (Warmth) and Status (Utility)

Explicit acceptance of GLW (e.g., 'they make conversation livelier') was high across the sample (*M = 4.07*). This acceptance was highest among the Middle Generation (*B = 0.268, p < .001*) and those from Zagreb (*p < .001*), who explicitly view these loanwords as a natural part of their urban heritage. On the other hand, despite high acceptance, the perceived pragmatic utility of GLW was significantly predicted only by a Zagreb background (*p < .001*). However, the questions here pointed more towards the utility within an informal situation ("German loanwords are helpful for communication within my family."), so the utilitarian dimension here also points more towards the Solidarity dimension. Age was not a significant factor here, indicating that participants across all generations cognitively categorise GLW as symbolic rather than utilitarian resources. Interestingly and somewhat surprisingly, the sentence "Usage of German loanwords signals lower education"." loaded onto the factor expressing Solidarity (0.570), and not Status, which requires a closer examination. The linear regression probe for this item shows that Zagreb differs from the rest of Croatia (*B = 0.382, p < .001*) in that, unlike the rest of Croatia, the Zagreb speakers do not see the stigma of lower education in GLW. This might suggest that for Zagrebians, GLW is something they are prepared to identify with, which is not true for other speakers of Croatian, and is thus also processed on the dimension of Solidarity.

One attitudinal belief ("German loanwords are mostly used by old people") did not load onto the primary Status or Solidarity factors (*Uniqueness = 0.942*) and was therefore analysed independently. The LRM revealed that neither age nor formative years region was a significant predictor ($R^2 = .024$, $F(4, 355) = 2.152$, $p = .074$), indicating a broad consensus regarding this belief.

3.3.5. Explicit Identity and behavioural Beliefs (Zagreb-related cohort, N=241)

In order to investigate the explicit social meaning of GLW for speakers with the strongest ties to the variety, a three-item question was administered exclusively to participants from the city of Zagreb (*N=241*). EFA revealed that these items - identity expression, formal avoidance, and perceived mockery – were all highly unique (*Uniqueness >.99*), suggesting they represent distinct cognitive beliefs, and not a single attitudinal factor. On the question of GLW as an expression of local identity, age was a significant predictor (*F(2,238)=3.33 ,p=.037*). Middle-aged (*M=3.97*) and older (*M=3.93*) participants identify with GLW significantly stronger than the younger generation (*M=3.57*, with unstandardized *B=0.41*, *p=.013*). This result indicates a weakening of GLW as a conscious symbol of urban identity among the youth, which could partly explain the measured loss of GLW in the younger generation, as described by Anđel (in press).

The ratings on the second question ("I avoid using German loanwords in formal situations.") do not show big generational differences. Older participants are marginally more likely than the young to report avoiding these words in formal settings (*B=0.48*, *p=.095*), but this observation cannot be taken as conclusive.

As for the third question ("I feel mocked by others when using German loanwords."), the data reveals a striking security of usage across the entire sample. Participants generally strongly disagreed (*M=4.29*) with the statement, with the LRM showing no significant differences by age (*p=.272*).

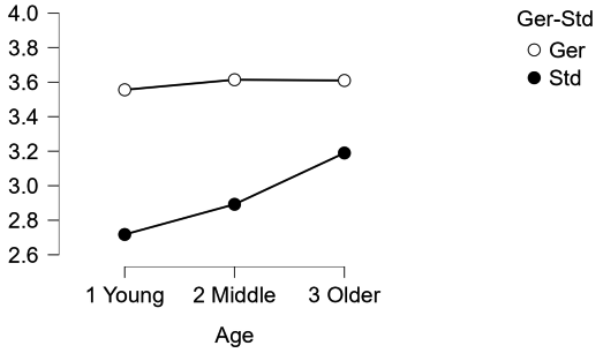
4. Discussion: Reconciling Belief, Cognition, and Loss

Our results point towards several developments regarding attitudes towards German loanwords (GLW) in Zagreb. At first glance, some of them might seem contradictory, so they require a closer look.

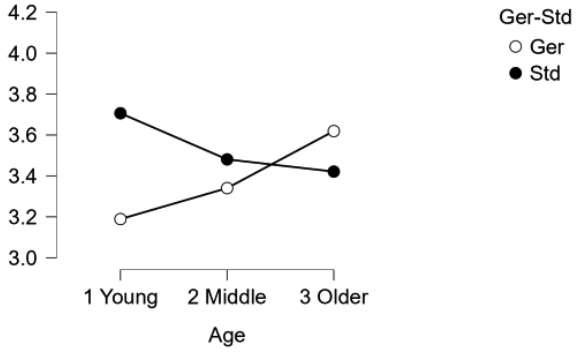
The first, and the most obvious finding, stemming from the matched-guise task, is that attitudes on the Solidarity (Warmth/Approachability) dimension (*B=–0.744,p<.001*) diverge significantly from those on the Status (Competence/Utility) dimension (*B=0.282,p<.001*) between the young and the older generation. High Solidarity rat-

ings for all age groups signal that GLW still carry covert prestige, are emphatically felt as authentic, and symbolise belonging to a group. This finding parallels the conclusions of Matešić et al. (2026, p. 135), who extensively explored the attitudes towards Croatian dialects, and concluded that the accentuation of loanwords in Zagreb carries a relatively high prestige, even for other Croatians, regardless of their own accentuation habits and knowledge that the Zagreb style of accentuation does not conform to the standard. However, the fact that the ratings of the GLW on the Status dimension are lowering from the older towards the younger generation reveals their gradual loss of suitability for social advancement. This finding corroborates the Imposed Norm Hypothesis, as formulated by Giles et al. (1974), where the rise of the Standard variant is expected to undermine the social utility value of other varieties, but also reveals the resilience of the affective appeal for the GLW across the sample.

Graph 6.
Solidarity/Warmth ratings, mean



Graph 7.
Status/Competence ratings, mean



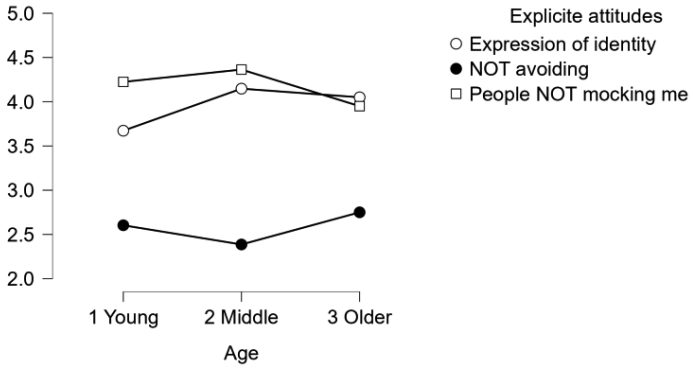
A second interesting finding is the intergenerational shift in social meanings attributed to the German loanwords. The older generation estimates that the likelihood of using GLW is not very different between white and blue-collar workers, with white-

collar workers even slightly more likely to use them. It appears older Zagrebians still remember university professors and doctors using GLW, which also explains why this is the only generation that rates GLW higher than SW on the Status (Competence) dimension (see *Graph 7. Status/Competence* above). A similar situation holds true for middle-aged participants, with an important twist. Despite similar ratings and no statistical significance for this difference, the positions for white and blue-collar likelihood of GLW usage are switched. This marks a trend that will fully develop for the younger generation, where there is clear expectation from white-collar workers to use standard words (SW), while blue-collar workers, or lower-status occupations, might also use GLW. This second finding further emphasises the discrepancy between young and older generations in social meanings of the GLW. For the young, German loanwords only remain in the private domain, gradually disappearing from professional contexts. For the older generation, they are not class-bound, but rather connected with a full spectrum of usages in the city. A bit of an interesting sidenote at this point is the tendency of middle-aged participants to assign higher ratings to white and blue-collar occupations, which cannot be addressed within this paper.

Furthermore, the data on situational probability (M = 4.51 for informal vs. M = 2.91 for formal, see Graph 5. *Acceptability ratings for the use of German loanwords by the formality of a situation*) suggests the GLW are now features of a functionally specialised variety and have assumed a diglossic "L" (Low) variety role (Ferguson, 1959). They are perceived as appropriate for casual use, but unacceptable for formal and even semi-formal roles, such as being interviewed on the street as a member of the public. The trend where older participants are more likely to report avoiding these words in formal settings exists, but is not significant (p = .095). It may suggest that the normative boundaries between the standard and heritage varieties are still upheld for those who grew up under stricter linguistic codification.

Finally, within the isolated Zagreb cohort (N = 241), we see a decline in explicit identity claims among the young (*M = 3.57*) compared to the middle generation (*M = 3.97*). This "cooling off" of the Zagreb identity suggests that the GLW remain part of their inherited heritage, but the young Zagrebians do not perceive them as vital and functionally usable as the two older generations. As Appel & Muysken (2005) note, when a variety loses some functions and is spoken in fewer domains, its perceived value decreases, which in turn demotivates younger people to use it. This shift in attitudes provides a plausible explanation of a psychological mechanism for the observed loss of GLW as a feature of the Zagreb variety of Croatian. For a young generation, GLW are nowadays just an endearing token of their heritage, and can be used in informal situations as a "safe choice" that carries solidarity without risk of social sanctions (Scotton, 1976).

Graph 8.
Explicit attitudes towards using German loanwords by Zagreb speakers, mean



5. Limitations

In the present study, we tried to show a change in the usage trends for GLW in Zagreb. However, the only way we could achieve this goal was to engage participants from different age groups and create an apparent timeline. A proper longitudinal study would have yielded more reliable results, but there were no measurements of this phenomenon prior to this study, so our conclusions about causality will remain provisional until some later study. Furthermore, every survey about explicit attitudes hides the risk that some participants are not answering honestly, but we hope this problem was mitigated by the high number of participants.

And lastly, upon delving deeper into the results we obtained, it became clear that they offer much more information than can be described in this paper, such as rich data about the attitudes of participants from other regions towards GLW in Zagreb and the attitudes by regional background of the parents. This information will enable us to paint a much more nuanced picture of attitudes within the Zagreb cohort itself, and should also be addressed in further papers.

6. Conclusion

Taken together, our findings offer the following answers to our research questions:

> RQ1: Our data reveal a classic divergence between the affective (Solidarity) and the rational (Status) attitudes. On implicit tasks, German loanwords (GLW) are significantly higher on the Solidarity (Warmth/Approachability) dimension ($B=-0.744, p<.001$), which confirms they still carry strong covert prestige as a still existing urban variety. Conversely, standard Croatian equivalents are preferred for Status (Competence) ($B=0.282, p<.001$), confirming the standard words (SW) as

a feature of the "imposed norm" for social advancement. While all generations maintain this distinction, there is a visible diminishing of the affective intensity among younger speakers, who rate GLW lower on warmth than the older cohorts.

RQ2: We identified a visible intergenerational shift in the indexical meanings of GLW. For the older generation, GLW are part of a multifunctional urban variety associated with all layers of society, including high-status white-collar occupations. However, for the younger generation, these words have undergone a domain contraction - they are now reduced to blue-collar, lower-status roles. This indicates that GLW are transitioning from general markers of urban identity to specialised class markers, used primarily in the private sphere or as casual slang.

Looking at our hypotheses, we can conclude the following:

H1: The hypothesis about Status and the Imposed Norm Hypothesis was confirmed. Across all age groups and regional backgrounds, the SW guise was significantly higher on the Status (Competence) dimension than the GLW guise ($B=0.282, p<.001$). This demonstrates a universal rational belief that the SW belong to the variety of social and professional success in Croatia.

H2: Our hypothesis about higher evaluations for the Solidarity dimension was confirmed. GLW achieved significantly higher ratings on the Solidarity (Warmth) dimension compared to standard words. This indicates that despite their loss of status, they remain symbols of Zagreb urban identity and belonging, which protects them from social rejection and mockery ($M=4.29$).

H3: The hypothesis about weaker emotional significance for the young generation was confirmed. Younger participants' evaluation of GLW on the Solidarity dimension was significantly less favourable than that of the middle and older generations. Furthermore, explicit identity claims were significantly lower among the young ($M=3.57$) compared to the middle-aged ($M=3.97$) within the Zagreb cohort, suggesting that the old status of these words - their vital, felt meaning - is disappearing for the new generation.

H4: The hypothesis about the interdependence of the regional background and the evaluation of the GLW was also confirmed. The region where participants spent their formative years was a significant predictor of explicit beliefs regarding identity and acceptance ($p<.001$). However, the Region was not a significant predictor for implicit evaluations in the matched-guise task ($p=.273$). This reveals a dissociation between explicit identity claims, which are anchored in local heritage, and automatic, implicit evaluative reactions, which reflect a broad national agreement on the status and warmth of GLW.

To sum up, our data offer a picture of a three-stage trajectory for GLW in the Zagreb variety, which can explain the psychological mechanisms underlying the observed loss

of GLW in Zagreb. For older participants, GLW represents features of a multifunctional dialect once useful in a wider functional range. The speakers maintain a strict cognitive boundary between the GLW and SW, and are less likely to use GLW in formal situations, because for them GLW are not a feature of casual slang, but of a proper dialectal variety that once used to be a regular means of urban communication. The middle-aged group represents the period where German loanwords carry the most symbolic weight and social value, even as their functional spread begins to contract. This group is likely to interpret the GLW as the expression of their identity and is significantly more likely than the young to associate GLW with White-Collar (High-Status) professions. For them, GLW are not just "old words", but markers of a prestigious urban "Zagreb core" identity, highly valued as signs of in-group belonging and local status. For our youngest participants, the "cooling" of identity marks the transition of GLW from a living vocabulary to purely symbolic heritage. Their identity is not as much defined by GLW anymore, and they are significantly more likely to associate GLW with blue-collar (low-status) roles. For them, GLW are words belonging to a soft, casual slang that can be used even in some less informal situations. They have already lost a good part of their functional roles as well as their place in professional registers. They remain mostly as a historical artefact and a sign of symbolic solidarity (Fishman, 1977).

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Izvorni znanstveni rad

Stavovi prema germanizmima u Zagrebu

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Sažetak

Njemačke su posuđenice jedno od istaknutih obilježja zagrebačkog dijalekta. Posljednjih se desetljeća često govori o njihovom polaganom nestanku, no vrlo je malo empirijskih studija koje bi taj fenomen i kvantitativno potvrdile. Cilj je ovog rada ispitati razmjere tog trenda i ispitati implicitne i eksplicitne stavove prema germanizmima u Zagrebu kao moguće okidače promjene. Dodatno, ispitujemo i potencijalne uzroke promjene u stavovima, poput dobi govornika i njihova jezične biografije u kojoj se ogleda regionalna pripadnost. Primarni su fokus istraživanja stavovi samih Zagrepčana prema germanizmima kao elementu vlastitog jezičnog identiteta, no njihove stavove uspoređujemo i sa stavovima govornika drugih hrvatskih varijeteta. Naši rezultati pokazuju da je trend povlačenja germanizama u Zagrebu stvaran i da počiva uglavnom na generacijskim razlikama. Dok stariji Zagrepčani germanizme još uvijek vide kao obilježja posve funkcionalnog dijalektalnog varijeteta s relativno visokim overtnim prestižom, za mlađu su generaciju oni samo emotivno topli izraz nasljeđa, kao i simbol regionalnog podrijetla i pripadanja. No, kao takvi, svejedno zadržavaju određeni skriveni prestiž.

Ključne riječi: germanizmi, status i solidarnost, zagrebački dijalekt, matched-guise task, stavovi prema jeziku.