Abstract

Thelander, Kerstin, Kerstin.Thelander@nordiska.uu.se, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Scandinavian Languages, Uppsala University, Sweden: “Forms of address and intra-relational variation in forms of address in Swedish drama dialogue”. Språk och stil 17, 2007, pp. 49–85.

In a text corpus consisting of 45 full-length Swedish dramas from 1725 to 2000, variation in forms of address is investigated. The material is divided into six 25-year-long periods, thus enabling the researcher to draw conclusions concerning, among other things, changes over time.

Intra-relational variation between the pronouns *du* (T, i.e. regular second-person singular) and *ni* (V, i.e. the respect form of second-person singular) is focused on.

The results show that the authors of drama dialogue often make systematic use of the variation in forms of address as a stylistic means to signal change in the relationship of the speaker and addressee, due e.g. to emotional mood (love, hatred, contempt etc.) or the setting of the encounter. In the early plays (1700–1850), modes of address can also depend on whether the interlocutors interact openly or secretly or even individually in asides. Examples are shown from different periods in the material and special interest is given to the play *Swedenhielms* (from 1925) by the Swedish author Hjalmar Bergman.

Situational variation in the use of *du* and *ni* is most frequent in the period 1800–1950. During this time, the use of *ni* in Sweden, however, becomes gradually more problematic since the form develops a pejorative overtone. When the Swedes in the late 1960s changed over to using more or less exclusively *du* (T), this is reflected in the drama dialogue by a much rarer use of address variation as stylistic resource.

Keywords: forms of address, drama dialogue, social variation, stylistic history, Swedish.