

INFLUENCE OF MULTILINGUALISM AND BILINGUALISM ON YOUTH LANGUAGE IN KAZAKHSTAN: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF INTERNET RESOURCES

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Abstract

The paper deals with specific multilingual situation in Kazakhstan and its influence on youth communication. Youth discourse vividly illustrates current cultural and linguistic degree of modern society, and it helps to predict its future development and direction. A lot of modern new slang, jargons, hybrid words and other youngsters' linguistic inventions in speech have become a usual tendency of standard language as well, as they have been steadily fixed as normal. The same principle is obvious about language interference and code switching which takes place in a bilingual communication environment. The current work presents a part of the overall research of youth interaction in multicultural language situation. And in the framework of this paper we argue that Internet language can be a serious presenter of involvement of youth language into the standard one including media, politics, everyday adults' speech. In order to demonstrate the issue, we present a thorough discourse analysis of the language materials of YouTube channel as a resource of youth code-switching and interference. The investigation involves popular youth channels including video clips, comedy shows and movie trailers. The analysis has shown a strong mixture of Kazakh, Russian and active inclusion of English as a language of prestige and high social status. We also display language inclusions which were historically borrowed from Russian by youth, and have become an inseparable part of modern national language. The matter of Russian influenced by Kazakh is an interesting object of scrutiny as well, as current state of everyday Russian in Kazakhstan differs significantly from that of Russia.

Keywords: youth language, standard language, Internet discourse, multilingualism, bilingualism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth identity is expressed by youth language which is very dynamic, and most words, structures and the ways of expression is clear only for the youth or even separate youth subcultures. Speech is a special form of reflecting reality which constantly change and modify along with changes in society, cultural and moral values. That is the reason why youth discourse is a very specific, delicate and difficult matter for research due to its non-constant status.

Youth discourse reflects unstable cultural and linguistic state of a society at the junction of literary language and jargon. In different periods of the history separate communities of people were united by common interests, and most of all by the consciousness of brotherhood and alienation from the rest of society. Those communities invented their own special ways of verbal and written communication. It was important not to be understood by outsiders, and hence there appeared various techniques of encryption such as metaphors, transferred meanings of words.

In modern society a common jargon or slang is an abnormal style of speech and speech etiquette (Sternin and Sternina, 2001). Moreover, it always influence the way the standard language develops (Stenström et al, 1996, p.10). It has become usual and natural in everyday life and moreover, it often sounds in mass media.

Being dominating users of slang, youth makes this language a part of pop-culture, necessary for self-expression and very prestigious.

High adaptability to all changes in life and quick acceptance of all news is a specific feature of an average youngster. Unofficial style in communication, humor and playful manners are caused by such reasons as seeking more comfortable conditions for mutual interaction, desire to express solidarity. Youth discourse is highly emotional, peculiar with many puns, jargons, slangs and converted sentences. Young people tend to fashion their distinctiveness, which creates an additional barrier between adults and youth (Bekzhanova, Ryssaldy, 2015). It is impossible to communicate with youngsters without understanding their language.

Youth language has taken a new wave to language modification of youth including expressions like "chatting", "googling", "trolling", "spamming", expressing feelings by emoticons, etc. (Tsibizov, 2009). The language is constantly changing and showing vividly the change of life.

2. LANGUAGE CONTACT OF YOUTH IN KAZAKHSTAN

In multilingual community the language of youth receives particular features, combining formal and informal styles, and at the same time mixing the languages they use and creating curious modifications. Multilingualism in Kazakhstan has deep roots, and has become a natural situation, a part of society. Kazakh and Russian function wider than other languages of minorities and dominate over them (Suleymenova, 2009). Most of youth are bilingual or even multilingual since the early childhood due to the usage of Russian and active increasing of status of Kazakh since the 1990-s. And if we consider that nearly 20% of the population is the representatives of other ethnic groups (except Kazakh and Russian) and they mainly know their native languages, we may state the fact of wide range of multilingualism.

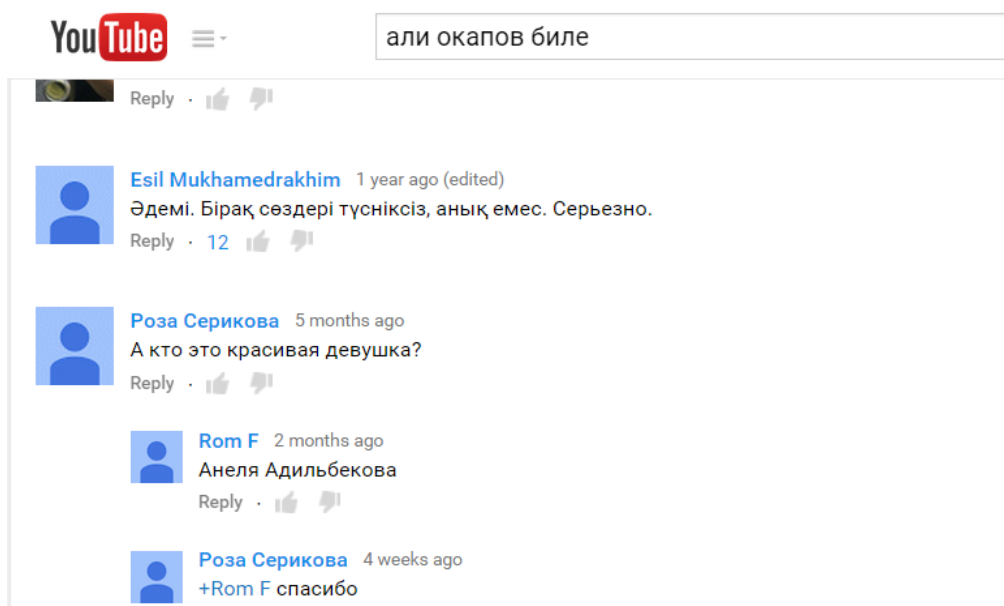
Certainly, language interference, code-switching cannot be avoided in any bilingual or multilingual society. Bilingualism as a linguistic phenomenon is a popular object of interest and investigated by a great number of scholars in the world (Auer, 1998; Milroy & Muysken, 1995; Myers-Scotton, 1993). Code switching indicates a high level of bilingualism. By code switching in sociolinguistics the authors mean the ability to switch from Language 1 to Language 2 and vice versa without breaking the rules of the host language considered as one of the socially motivated types.

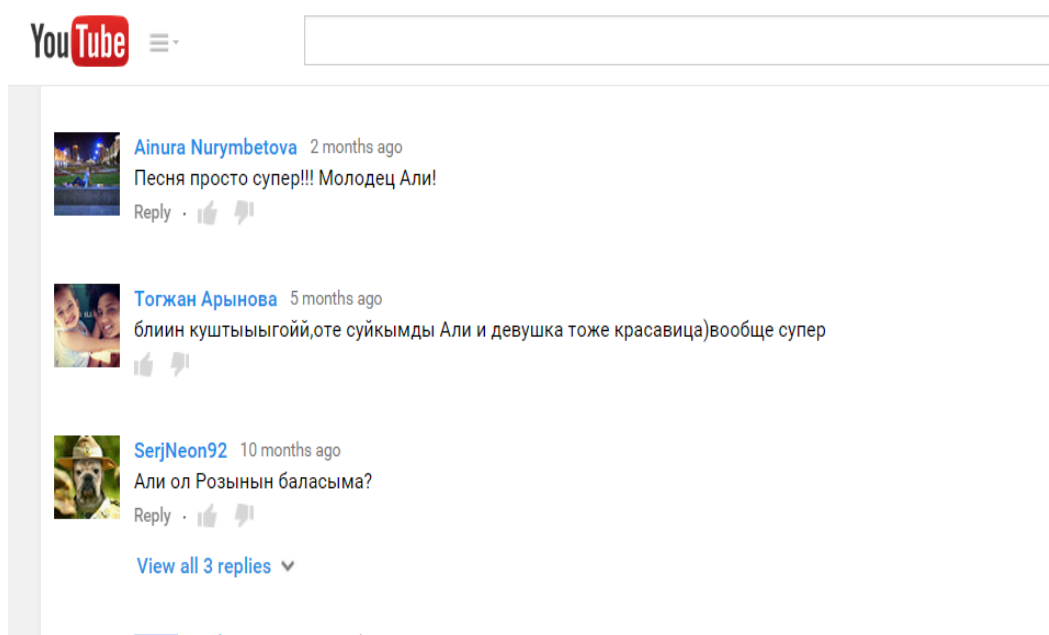
3. ANALYSIS OF KAZAKH YOUTH SPEECH

3.1 Discourse analysis of Internet resources

Below we give an example of modern communication of bilingual Kazakh youth in the form of comments on YouTube channel in Internet. The examples are selected from the list of corpus collected for linguistic analysis. Kazakh speaking youngsters discuss the new video of a popular young singer Ali Okapov. Figure 1 illustrates the facts of lexical insertions in code switching in Kazakh and Russian.

Figure 1. Fragment from comments on YouTube channel (video of Ali Okapov)





If we analyze the extracts, we can observe an interesting mixture of Kazakh and Russian. Though most of the listeners of the singer have a concrete intention to express their thoughts in Kazakh, Russian is often inserted. The first comment sounds in the following way:

*“Әдемі. Бірақ түсініксіз. Сөздері анық емес. **Серьезно**”.*

English translation: *“Beautiful. But incomprehensible. The words are not clear. Seriously”.*

The word «серьезно» is a Russian word, and it is used as intensifier by youngsters rather than in its original meaning “earnestly”. As the youngster cannot find any equivalent intensifier for the situation, he chooses the one he usually uses in similar cases. Although it is a Russian word, it precisely expresses his emotion and produces the effect he wanted.

The second interference of Russian is also caused by the lack of the appropriate expression of pity in the active Kazakh vocabulary of the youngster:

«блиииин куштиии гоой. Оте суйкимди Али и девушка тоже красавица) вообще супер».

English translation: *“Shit it’s gorgeous. Ali is very nice and the girl is beautiful too) really super”.*

Блин is a colloquial interjection in Russian which is used to express any strong emotion. It is not vituperative at the same time, and that makes it appropriate for most cases. The youngster probably could not find the Kazakh equivalent to show his admiration.

Вообще супер is an expression from Russian performing as an intensifier in youngsters’ speech.

Influence of the Russian language on Kazakh is reasonable enough, as Kazakh had little power in society and was limited by a few functional spheres. However, interference happens not only Kazakh (influenced by Russian), but vice versa. In everyday speech it is really difficult to understand Kazakhstani Russian for Russians from Russia. Many words and expressions are involved into the language due to their specific place in our lives.

3.2 Analysis of language interference of youth: from slang to standard language

Youth language is a good indicator of prediction of the language development. A lot of modern new slang or jargons in youth speech have become a usual tendency of adults as well, as the words have been fixed in the language. The same principle is obvious about language interference which takes place in a bilingual communication environment.

It is easy to confuse code-switching and language interference. Rosenzweig believes that “interference is breaking the rules of bilingual correlation in contact languages, which leads to deviation from the norms (Rosenzweig 1972, p.28). In comparison with code-switching, interference does not cause language shift, but change of one language influenced by another one.

One of the good examples of youth interference that has become a tendency is adding Russian prefixes to Kazakh roots, i.e. morphological interference. The words which denote blood relations are very specific in Kazakh, and sometimes there is no full equivalent in Russian. Though there is a translation, its connotations do not coincide. Eg, жеңге – sister-in-law – сноха. «Сноха» in Russian also means a daughter-in-law. And the word in Russian does not include some additional features which in Kazakh. In Kazakh zhenge is a special woman. She is not only a wife of your brother, but the chief economy manager in the house, a guardian for the younger siblings of her husband, a person who is always ready to help and take care of the youngsters. As Kazakhs used to have a lot of children, the status of zhenge was a great responsibility. So, as Russian translation of the word does not quite coincide with the Kazakh one, the version which has been fixed in the language is “жеңгешка». Adding Russian diminutive hypocoristic suffix “-шк” and ending “-а” partially transform the word into Russian. The same modification can be observed in the following words.

Ағашка (*uncle*)

Татешка (*aunt*)

Апашка (*older aunt or in some regions- grandmother*)

The tendency of adding Russian endings “-а” and “-я” is widely used in colloquial speech concerning Kazakh women’s name. As Russian names (though derived from Latin, Greek and etc) possess these endings, they are easily declined in a specific way (Галина, Галины, Галине, Галину, Галиной, о Галине). Kazakh names are also modified in colloquial speech in order to make the names easy to be declined in Russian.

Айгүл – Айгуля

Айнұр – Айнура

Әйгерім – Айгеримочка

In the last example we can also see Russian diminutive hypocoristic suffix “-очк”. Nowadays this example is usual in everyday communication and can be heard by adults as well. However, it all started from youngsters’ “adaptation” of the Kazakh language into the easiest variant to be used in Russian.

Thus, we assume some newness of youth language is often fixed in common colloquial speech and quits being a slang or non-standard variant of language use.

4. CONCLUSION

Youth speech displays vividly the current and real state of modern lively language. Its dynamics increase along with the changes in the life of society. Investigation of its peculiarities gives the scholars opportunity to make some predictions about the tendencies of development of the whole language in the nearest future. In the analysis given above we proved that youth slangs and language inversions often enters the language and become inseparable parts of it. Sometimes it is hard to identify that this or that word or collocation used to be a slang or jargon of youth. In multilingual society mixture of languages and language contact also contribute to the formation of totally new youth language. Modern Kazakh youth discourse is characterized as a unique coexistence of the Slavic and Turkic cultures and languages – Kazakh and Russian.

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Journal, Vol. 59

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