

SOCIOPRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF CODE-SWITCHING AMONG REPATRIATED KAZAKH STUDENTS

Atirkul Agmanova¹, Damira Akynova^{2*}, Sholpan Zharkynbekova³, Aliya Aimoldina⁴

¹Prof., Dr., , L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, KAZAKHSTAN, agmanova@mail.ru

² PhD student, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, KAZAKHSTAN, mirada-86@mail.ru

³Prof., Dr., L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, KAZAKHSTAN, zsholpan@rambler.ru

⁴ PhD student, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, KAZAKHSTAN, a_aliya_86@mail.ru

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The spread of English as a global language has shaped the linguistic spaces of many countries in the world. English is considered as a condition for successful integration into the global economy in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In recent years many studies have been carried out on code switching as a linguistic phenomenon in the educational space. The issue of English-Kazakh code switching has been the focus of some research in Kazakhstan quite recently; therefore, studies in this field are in the development stage and highly relevant. The current language situation is reflected in the Project “Trinity of Languages” where, along with the Kazakh language as a state language, English has been assigned a special status as the language of integration into the global economy. The present paper addresses the research on sociopragmatic functions of code switching among students of high schools. The role and the current status of English in the linguistic space of Kazakhstan are briefly analysed in the paper. The study investigated Kazakh-speaking students of higher educational institutions of the capital of Kazakhstan – Astana. The study was conducted at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, S.Seifullin Kazakh Agrotechnical University. The participants of the study are students-repatriates majoring in «Foreign languages» (English). The questionnaires as well as the transcripts of the students’ speech were used for gathering data. The results of the study show that code switching has important functions in foreign language classroom that contributes to effective communication. According to our research, several functions of the sociolinguistic character have been determined during the research. The findings of the research demonstrate that English-Kazakh code switching facilitates foreign language learning.

Keywords: Code-switching, sociopragmatic, function.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays English is considered as a means of social, economic, educational and cultural development of society. Promotion of English is supported by the majority of states on the political level, which reflects its importance in the world. One of the key areas of promoting English is the educational area; therefore, in the context of globalization and the imperatives of the time, the issues of English functioning in the educational area are among the most topical ones.

Functioning of English in education is characterized by its own peculiarities, among which an important place is given to code switching. The researches on code switching in second language acquisition and learning,

especially English, have been conducted by many scholars (Li Wei (2008), Martin-Jones, M. (1995), Cook, V. (1991), Macaro, E. (2001), Üstünel, E. & Seedhouse, P. (2005) and others). In Kazakhstan, similar studies were carried out in the area of the Kazakh-Russian and Russian-Kazakh code switching. It should be noted that there are not so many studies on the issues of Anglo-Kazakh and Kazakh-English code switching in the educational space, and therefore its special relevance and importance is obvious in Kazakhstan's linguistic and educational space.

The paper addresses the research on sociopragmatic functions of code switching among repatriated students of high schools. The theoretical background reveals code-switching in the sociolinguistic aspect. Methodology gives the description of the procedure. The results show us sociopragmatic functions of code-switching among the repatriated students.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the sociolinguistic aspect a code-switching is considered from the point of view of the influence of political, demographic factors, ethnic and territorial affiliation, social status and other factors. Many researchers note that code-switching should be considered from the sociolinguistic perspective. It is mainly due to the fact that the linguistic behavior refers to the (social) identity of the speaker and its features, i.e. aspects of a social life. According to P. Gardner-Chloros (2009), initial fundamental researches on the code-switching were developed together with research on sociolinguistics abroad and they are associated with names of such linguists as J. Blom and J. Gumperz (1972) in the ethnographic aspect, Sh Poplak (1980) and C. Myers-Scotton (1993) in the grammatical aspect. The scholars used data obtained in the study of natural conversational speech for subsequent analysis of code-switching. Secondly, code-switching is a construct formed from the behavior of bilinguals. Watching the daily interaction of people in the multicultural society, linguists noticed that speakers use two or more types of languages integrating them in socially significant ways. And, finally, socio-linguistic factors are the main and the primary source of variation in the code switching.

3 METHODOLOGY

In the material we consider the pragmatic aspect of Kazakh-English code switching in accordance with such components of the communication as the author and the recipient of speech, features of their relations, the situation in which an act of speech takes place, the theme of the speech act, the goal of participants of the speech act.

The study investigated Kazakh-speaking students of higher educational institutions of the capital of Kazakhstan – Astana. The study was conducted at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, S.Seifullin Kazakh Agrotechnical University. The participants of the study are students-repatriates majoring in «Foreign languages» (English). The questionnaires as well as the transcripts of the students' speech were used for gathering data.

The material is presented by the oral speech of young people, we also used records on social networks. It includes a conversation between students at the university. We studied social networks such as Facebook, Vkontakte, Mail.ru Agent. The choice of the abovementioned social networks is due to the fact that they are the most popular ones among the Kazakh youth.

4 RESULTS

Let's demonstrate the identified functions of code-switching on concrete examples on the proposed groups.

The function of addressee – code-switching serves to clarify to whom the statement is drawn, i.e. to address statement to a specific communication partner. Let us illustrate this with an example;

Короче, мына жерде, вот, слова видишь, «yew and oak». Получается, мыналар ағаштарға относится. Поняла? «Cooper and bronze», ол относится металдарға. Келесі «vodka and gin» это относится к «drink»-у. Получается, ну к водяным этим... Это не знаю к чему относится. Келесі потом ол бізде «reference» и «refer» туралы сұрады. Короче, правда қазір не помню что там было, но нужно каждыйына анықтама жазасың. Поняла?

This example illustrates the function of addressee of code-switching. A student uses English as a guest language for a group-mate who speaks English and, accordingly, is proficient in the guest language.

The function of self-identification – code-switching is used to emphasize their ability to speak the same language. For example:

*Также есть момент менталитета. **Not necessarily statistically significant (i.e. anecdotal)**, но на личном примере, сестренка хотела учиться в техническом вузе, но ее аташка был против,*

поскольку он хотел, чтобы она выбрала более женскую профессию. Также слышал от парней-казахов, что считают странным видеть девушек, работающих программистами. Думаю, что этот менталитет также распространяется на **HR, tendery, hiring manager** и другие профессии.

The conversation took place between the first-year students at the beginning of the academic year. It is known that not all students speak English at the proper level at the initial stage of learning the language. However, many freshmen students have a good level of English when they enter the university. The basic knowledge of English is acquired by them at school or some parents hire tutors to teach English. In this conversation, students discuss issues regarding gender discrimination in the session on the subject «Basic English». A student participating in the discussion previously studied in the United States on an exchange program. The example shows the student's knowledge regarding the names of professions in English, thereby demonstrating knowledge of English.

Esoteric function – code-switching is used to hide information from other listeners. Here is an example:

*Мен сенен бірдеңе сұрайын дегенмін, қазір тұра тұршы, **cucumber**-ге барып келейін.*

In this case, the word «cucumber» means the lavatory among the students. The conversation took place during a break in the company of boys and girls, and to conceal this information from unauthorized listeners the esoteric function was implemented.

Phatic function – code-switching used to establish, maintain and complete contact with the foreign-language speaker. Let us illustrate this with an example:

Сәлеметсіз бе!

Маған материалдық көмек керек.

As all college students, I have to take out loans to pay for my education.

We all go to college to excel and to accomplish particular goals. One of my goals since freshman year was to study abroad in Paris. That goal then also became my dream.

Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to study in Paris due to various obstacles and challenges that I had to overcome. They changed my priorities, I had things to worry about more than my own education. Thank God (!) now everything's relatively settled.

I just want to ask you as a person to support me on my way to accomplish my goal and to achieve my dream. If you're able and willing to show any form of support, I'd truly appreciate it and sincerely thank you for your assistance!

The main things here are intentions and sincerity.

No matter the size of donation, I will equally appreciate your help. For more details, please refer to my fundraising campaign by following the links below.

Thank you in advance!

Как и все студенты приходится влезать в долги для оплаты учёбы.

С первого курса я не имел возможности уехать на учёбу в Париж.

Было то одно, то другое, у меня были другие заботы и приоритеты. Сейчас, Слава Богу, всё относительно хорошо!

Я хочу просто по человечески попросить своих земляков о поддержке, не важно в каком размере. Самое главное это намерения и искренность.

С миру по нитке, голому рубаха. Если у вас есть желание и возможность меня немного поддержать, я буду вам очень благодарен!

Заранее спасибо за понимание!

Если вас что-то интересует, просто напишите мне.

Всем заранее үлкен рахмет!

In this case, the Kazakh bilingual addresses the audience of Kazakh-speaking and Russian-speaking bilingual students who are studying at the language departments. The contact is established and ended in the Kazakh language, thus demonstrating the respect for the mother tongue.

Quotation function – code-switching is used for quoting aphorisms and sayings of others. For example:

Бәрі маған «Don't be shy» дейді.

Как говорится «Yesterday is a history», так что наслаждайся этим днем.

In the first example, a student cites his friends «Do not be shy», who may be studying with her, as the quote is given in English. In the second example the student uses the popular expression, which is given in the guest language. Using the guest language is also due to the efforts of verbal economy, as this expression is often used in the English language and its translation into the matrix language will require a larger number of linguistic units in the matrix language.

Humorous function – code-switching is used to create humorous effect. Here is an example:

Элитный нянning, коляcing и памперcing.

Я же говорю, I'm an Englishman in Astana with бауырсақ, құрт and шай.

In the first example the student uses morphemes of English to give a humorous tone for the conversation. In the second case, the student uses the phrase from the song «Englishman in New York» during a casual conversation among peers. To amuse his friends the student uses the phrase from the song, adapting it to the realities of the Kazakh culture.

The function of social (group) identity expression – code-switching is used to express the identity to the group. For example:

I will continue my магистр degree Астанада.

English бізде қазіргі level advanced болу керек.

We believe that at the global level, all statements related to the English language, the theme of education, somehow unite all students in the group of students. All students identify themselves with this social group of students.

We conducted the survey in line with the sociolinguistic aspects of our research and revealed subjective assessment of students about the sociopragmatic functions of code-switching in bilingual speech of repatriated students. Then the correlation between the survey data and speech data was conducted. The analysis of the sociopragmatic functions of code-switching showed the following:

1) The results of using addressee function (13% - sociolinguistic survey results and 16% - the analysis of language material), esoteric function (8% and 10%, respectively) and the function of social (group) identity expression (12% and 26%, respectively) are correlated and have a low rate of usage.

2) The results of a sociolinguistic survey show the average use (46%) phatic function, but in reality, its use has a lower rate (36%).

3) With regard to quotation functions, there is also a noticeable difference between the results of the survey and analysis of the factual material. Sociolinguistic survey results show relatively low usage rate of quotation function (38%), while the results of the analysis of language material to illustrate a higher rate (61%) use this feature.

4) The humorous function is characterized by a low figure (19%) according to the survey respondents. The index of this function in the speech of bilingual students predominates, as evidenced by the results of the analysis of factual material (36%).

5) According to the function of social identity expression, there is a noticeable difference in terms of the results of the survey and analysis of linguistic material. Despite the fact that only 48% of the students surveyed indicated this function, the analysis of the factual material shows a fairly high level of its use (71%).

5 CONCLUSION

Analysis of sociopragmatic functions of code-switching showed that subjective evaluation of the use of a particular function except phatic function were slightly underestimated in comparison with the actual use of these functions in the speech of bilingual students. The lowest rate of addressee function may be due to the homogeneity of the study participants: they are all students of the specialty “Foreign language: two foreign languages” and “Foreign philology” and, therefore, during the classroom time to address a specific participant appears to be somewhat complicated, since all the students speak a foreign language, so that all participants can be involved in the communication. As for esoteric function and the function of social identity expression, the language proficiency plays a great role, therefore, there is no need to demonstrate proficiency in English. The low rate of actual use of phatic function indicates the institutional context of the

study: participants, in most cases, establish contacts with peers and teacher in class time, which encourages the use of a foreign language, hence the use of the mother tongue is minimized. Obviously, this explains the relatively low use of phatic function in the speech of bilingual students. The high rate of actual use of the function of the social identity expression indicates affiliation of all participants to the microsocial student group, which is characterized by identifying themselves with the student group. The high rate of quotation function may indicate frequent use of quotations and aphorisms of famous British and American linguists, writers, poets and prominent people in different areas on the original language in the speech of students. The medium rate of humorous function compared with low results of the survey may demonstrate the desire of students to stand out with originality and creativity of presentation, to defuse the situation. In general, the analysis of sociopragmatic functions suggests that the results of a sociolinguistic survey and analysis of the factual material are sufficiently comparable.

REFERENCE LIST

- Li, W. (2008). Research perspectives on bilingualism and bilingual education. In *Encyclopedia of language and education*, volume 10: Research methods in language and education, eds. K.A. King and N.H. Hornberger, 137-50. London: Springer.
- Martin-Jones, M. (1995). Code-switching in the classroom: Two decades of research. In *One speaker, two languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching*, eds. L. Milroy and P. Muysken, 90-111. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook, V. (1991). *Second language learning and language teaching*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Macaro, E. (2001). Analyzing student teachers' codeswitching in foreign language classrooms: Theories and decision making. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85 (4), 531-548.
- Üstünel, E. & Seedhouse, P. (2005). Why that, in that language, right now? Code-switching and pedagogical focus. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 15 (3), 302-325. [Online] Retrieved March 20, 2011, from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2005.00093.x/pdf>
- Gardner-Chloros P. (2009). *Code-switching*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press. 242 p.
- Blom J., Gumperz J. (1972). *Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code Switching in Northern Norway // Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*. John Gumperz and Del Hymes (Eds.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. P. 407-434.
- Poplack Sh. (1980). Sometimes I'll Start a Sentence in Spanish y Termino en Espanol: Toward a Typology of Code-switching // *Linguistics*. Vol. 18, № 233-234. P. 581-618.
- Myers-Scotton C. (1993). *Dwelling languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.