

A Study on Tatar–Russian Code Switching (Based on Instagram Posts)

Guzel A. Izmailova*

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Irina V. Korovina

Kazan Federal University, Kremliovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russia

Elzara V. Gafiyatova

Ogarev Mordovia State University, Bol'shevistskaya Ulitsa, 68, Saransk, Respublika Mordoviya, Russia

Abstract

The present study aimed to analyze the code-switching. The paper focused on functions which motivated code switching in social life and Instagram pages. Data was collected from Instagram pages of Tatar celebrities from the beginning of January till the end of March 2018 (more that 700 posts were analyzed). The author concluded that the code-switching (CS) was very common among multi or bilinguals who switched between different languages for communication with each other. The literature review was performed on the world science, described the development, establishment and history of both Russian and foreign sciences, examples of real-life situations facing by modern people. The authors came to a conclusion that the most common functions for study were “phatic switching” and “referring to habitual expressions”. In this regard, the following methods were used: analysis of problem based on the study of linguistic, philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, cultural, and methodological literature. Authors hope that research materials may be useful worldwide by educators and researchers who are involved in the professional linguistic research and training.

Keywords: Compound bilinguals; Tatar language; Bilingualism; Tatar-Russian code switching; Functions of code switching.



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1. Introduction

Code switching is a term that is used to describe a feature of bilinguals' speech. In some situations or under certain circumstances, bilinguals may switch from one language to another. This almost happens spontaneously even in some cases that can be controlled by a speaker to some extent (Antúnez, 2013).

Code switching can be caused by a number of reasons, which vary depending, first of all, on types of bilinguals: immigrants switching from their mother tongue to the language of the country they immigrate to illustrate the case different from bilinguals using two languages in their homelands. For instance, there are a number of nationalities whose representatives are bilingual since childhood in Russia (Appel and Muysken, 2006). They are called “compound bilinguals” who have a term for every concept they know. Unlike them, immigrants are usually “coordinated bilinguals”, who have different associations for each concept they know and unequally master two languages (Blom and Gumperz, 1972).

The question of two languages' correlation in the Republic of Tatarstan is quite complex as it also touches upon relations of two nations – the Russians and Tatars (Boztepe, 2003).

The present paper focused on compound bilinguals of Tatarstan who speak Tatar and Russian as mother tongues. Few researchers have addressed problems of Tatar-Russian code switching. For example, Oksana Tyshchenko-Monastyrskaya focuses on both grammar and functions of code switching examples in data in a study on Crimean Tatar and Russian code switching. She finds out that the functional aspects of code switching seem to be more apparent “when larger units like clauses are being code-switched”. She also describes differences based on the speaker's generation showing that Tatar is preferred by older generations, whereas Russians tend to be more common for middle-aged and younger speakers: such tendencies are mainly determined by a speaker's feeling more comfortable with one of two languages. Finally, she notes that the most common code switching functions are topic change and ease of expression in the conversation for all Tatar-Russian speakers (Gardner Chloros, 1991).

The history of code switching research in linguistics is often dated from (Gataullin *et al.*, 2017) “Social meaning in linguistic structures”. This work is certainly Colorado Research in Linguistics, 4 important and influential, not least for introducing the terms situational and metaphorical switching. However, by 1972 the term “code switching” was well attested in the literature, and several studies in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics prefigured later code switching research in sociocultural linguistics. Below, I survey some important early work. One of the earliest Russian studies in linguistic anthropology to deal with issues of language choice and code switching was (Hale, 1995). In addition to his analysis of the economic relations, networks, and geography of residents, (Hale, 1995) sought to answer the question, “How does it happen, for example, that among bilinguals, the ancestral language will be used on one occasion and English on another, and that on certain occasions bilinguals will alternate, without apparent cause, from one language to another?” (Hale, 1995) suggested that interactions among

family members or other intimates were most likely to be conducted in Russian, while formal talk with Anglo Tatar was most likely to use the medium of English (even when all parties in the interaction were able to understand Russian).

In less clearly defined situations, language choice was less fixed, and elements from each language could occur. Further, Barker proposed that younger people were more apt to use multiple languages in a single interaction than were their elders, and that the use of multiple varieties was constitutive of a local Russia identity. An important base for code switching research in the field of linguistics is Halliday (1964) *Languages in Contact*. One of those inspired by Halliday (1964)'s book was "Language Contacts" is cited as the first article to use the term "code-switching" in the field of linguistics. Halliday (1964) was interested to describe the effect of language contact on languages, in addition to describing the activities of bilingual speech communities. He suggested that (Hale, 1995) description of Russia was insufficient, since it listed only four speech situations: intimate, informal, formal, and inter-group discourse. Halliday (1964) argued that's (Hale, 1995) taxonomy was "insufficiently articulated" to describe all potential organizations of bilingual speech events. He contended that anthropology should look to linguistics – particularly to structuralism – in order to properly describe the practice of bilingual speech, and the language acquisition/socialization process that takes place in bilingual communities.

Halliday (1964) description of switching codes suggested that bilingual individuals possess two separate linguistic varieties, which (ideally) they employ on separate occasions. He suggested that frequent alternation, such as that (Hale, 1995) described among Russian youth, was a product of poor parenting. Regular code switchers, (Halliday, 1964) speculated, "in early childhood, were addressed by the same familiar interlocutors indiscriminately in both languages". This indiscriminate use differed from the ideal bilingual of Halliday (1964) imagination.

2. Literature Review

The use of code switching has increased in almost all aspects of social life, such as economy, science, technology, law, literature, as well as entertainment in the republic of Tatarstan during the last five years. Until now, there have been no completed studies and accurate evaluation results on the automated disambiguation for Tatar (Gataullin *et al.*, 2017).

The President of the Republic was the first person who began to use social networks. Therefore, many Tatarstan celebrities use code switching in their verbal communication on the Internet where they usually share their daily life stories, news, and concert programs or theater repertoires through social networking. The paper aimed to answer the following research questions: a) what are main types of applied code switching by Tatar-Russian bilinguals in the written form? b) What are main code switching functions that are used by Tatar-Russian bilinguals in the written form? The collected data include examples of the applied code switching by educated and low-educated people (some analyzing Instagram posts are not grammatically correct). In this paper, we sought to find how Tatar-Russian code switching occurs not only in the oral form, but also in the written type.

Code switching is a contradictory phenomenon since there is the terminology ambiguity of terms "code switching", "code mixing", and "borrowing". Kachru defines code switching as a situation where "the change is determined by functions, situations and participants", whereas "code mixing is where linguistic units are transferred between codes" (Hale, 1995). Halliday (1964), Ibrahimova *et al.* (2017) described code mixing as a linguistic behavior in which a code is dominant and elements of other codes are assimilated into the base code. It is different from borrowing which is a monolingual practice, whereas mixing is an intra-group bilingual behavior. McClure uses the term "code switching" as a general aspect covering both code mixing and borrowing. Milroy and Muysken also use code switching as a general term covering various modes of bilingual behavior (Jakobson, 1960).

Analyzing the speech of compound bilinguals, there is a need to decide whether the code switching in this case "is considered as a deviation from some norms" (Kachru, 1978) "a sign of a poor level of bilingualism" or "characteristic of fluent bilinguals". As Tatars life in Russia has a perfect command of both Tatar and Russian and they effectively use both languages in studies and work, it cannot be concluded that they have low levels of bilingualism. It is thus possible to claim that the code switching is not a feature of the term "imperfect bilingual person who supposedly has less than the ideal competence in any language" in case of Tatar-Russian bilinguals (Kadochnikova *et al.*, 2017).

In compound bilinguals, whose skills in two languages are equal to some extent, code switching has different features from typical ones for applied code switching by immigrants, whose command of second languages is often worse than the command of a mother tongue. Some of these features are described in the present paper.

3. Methodology of Research

In order to investigate Tatar-Russian Code Switching, the following methods were used: analysis of problem based on the study of linguistic, philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, cultural, and methodological literature. Data was collected from Instagram pages of Tatar celebrities from the beginning of January till the end of March 2018 and more than 700 posts were analyzed.

4. Results and Discussion

Traditionally, there are two main approaches to study code switching: the sociolinguistic and structural approaches. The sociolinguistic approach appeared earlier and focused on "how social meaning is created in CS and what specific discourse functions are served". This approach considers code switching as a discourse phenomenon caused by a number of social or discourse reasons. The language picture of world is spontaneously created. It is not

purposefully created by humans as the language: a person may speak languages, but know nothing about its structure (Kajumova *et al.*, 2017).

The grammatical aspects of code switching have been studied in recent decades. The structural approach appeared and aimed to identify syntactic and morphosyntactic constraints in the code switching. For the grammatical analysis, differences of inter- and intra-sentential code switching are significantly important, as different syntactical mechanisms are used in these two types of code switching: A speaker should apply knowledge in word valency and skills in word-building while doing the intra-sentential code switching.

In a paper by Malik (1994) entitled “Code switching of Russian-Speaking Tatars”, authors point out that “insertions are mainly represented by nouns, pronouns, particles, and adverbs. Island-switches are predominantly nominated by verbs”. In the present research, the biggest part of phrases (85%) illustrating Tatar-Russian code switching represents its intra-sentential type.

In a sociolinguistic approach, motives, functions and reasons of code-switching have been widely studied by a number of researchers from various linguistic perspectives resulting in many classifications of functions based on different criteria. For instance, based on the concept of functional specialization by Merkitabeyev *et al.* (2018) they listed six main functions of code-switching as follows: *referential, poetic, metalinguistic, expressive, phatic, and directive functions*. Many types of human activity are implemented through collective efforts of representatives from different ethnic groups and mediated by the process of communication. Communication, particularly inter-ethnic communication, acts as the most important factor of human activities (McClure, 1977).

Referential switches help to describe phenomena by the use of lexical units of the second language. Directive code switching is applied when it is necessary to include or exclude a certain addressee into conversation. For example, a child can switch to their mother's language, which is not spoken and understood by the father, to keep something in secrecy. Expressive switching serves to express the multilingual status of a speaker. Phatic switching uses the language alternation to change the conversation tone. This type of function can be called a stylistic function. Metalinguistic switching occurs when speakers want to comment on their use of a term. Finally, poetic switching occurs when speakers want to switch languages for aesthetic purposes such as making jokes, creating play on words or rhymes.

5. Summary

Many classifications overlap and use different terms for the same functions of code switching as long as present other unique functions are not mentioned in other studies. For instance, Malik discussed sociolinguistics of code-switching of the language situation in India and explained the following ten reasons for speakers for code switching: a) The lack of facility (which is synonym for the referential function); b) The lack of registral competence; c) The speaker mood; d) Amplifying and emphasizing a point; e) Habitual expressions (e.g. discourse markers); f) semantic significance; g) Indicating the identity in a group (which is a kind of similar expressive function) (Milroy and Muysken, 1995).

There were distinguished six main functions of code switching in examples of Tatar-Russian code switching in Instagram profiles. It should be noted that Tatar is a matrix language for Tatars; and Russian is an embedded language with elements that can be included in phrases in Tatar. In Instagram posts, we almost do not see examples of embedding Tatar words into Russian phrases. We thus analyzed reasons why Tatars switch to Russian from time to time (Mordvinova and Sadykova, 2017).

Showing emotions – *phatic switching*, is the first reason for switching to Russian.

(1) *Всё* [Vse] (smile emoticon)! *Всё* [Vse] (smile emoticon)! *Всёёёёёёё* [Vseeeeeeee](emoticon)! = done / completed!

In this example, the Russian word “*всё*” is shorter and brighter than the Tatar one – [Тэмамланды]; therefore, it sounds more powerful and emotional.

The second reason for the Tatar-Russian code switching is one of the most frequent ones – *referring to habitual expressions*. In our examples, such expressions are often prepositions, conjunctions, and single adverbs.

(2) *Потому что* урамда [*Patamushta* uramda] = because outside (conjunction)

(3) Менэ ничектер иртэн йогерэ башларга иде... *Только* кыш көне салкын!!! [Mena nichekter irten iogere bashlarga ide... *Tolko* kish kone salkin] = How to start running in the morning ... Only it is cold in the winter (adverb)

(4) Башкортостанда буген *уже!* [Bashkortostanda bugen *uzhe*] = Today in Bashkortostan already (adverb)

In examples (2) and (3), the conjunction “*потому что*” and the adverb “*только*” fulfill the function of linkers. Such discourse linkers do not possess any strong denotative meaning and they are used to connect clauses or sentences. In pronouncing such linkers, a speaker already formulates the following phrase, and thus the speakers become inattentive to this point and pronounce words that first come to their mind.

The third reason is more difficult to be determined since it is not obvious. By excluding many other options, we come to the conclusion that Tatars *show their “dual identity”* in the majority of cases through the code switching. The term “*dual national identity*” is typical for all compound bilinguals. The dual identity splits into the following components for Tatars: being Tatar by origin and being Russian by citizenship. Code switching allows them to express their dual identity in everyday communication.

(5) Имешь иртэн торгач та ике *стакан* су эчсән *организм* шундук уяна [Imesh irten torgach ta ike *stakan* su echsen, *organism* shunduk uayna] = If you drink 2 glasses of water, it means that the organism wakes up.

There is the Tatar equivalent for the Russian word “*стакан*”, but the speaker uses the Russian item for no other reason, but showing her dual identity. A different case can be seen in the second clause in (5): the word “*организм*”

is an international word that is used in many languages. Therefore, this word is heard and seen more frequently than the Tatar one and comes first to the speaker's mind. We can call this reason *opting for international words*. One more example of this reason can be observed in the word “класс” in the following sentence:

(6) Бәләкәй классларда укыганда, мәктәп столоваясында тугызынчы класс укучылары безнен белән янәшәдә утыралар иде... [Belekei klasslarda ukiganda, mektep stolovaysinda tygizinchi klass ukuchilari beznen belen yaneshede utiralalar ide...] =

The word “столовая” represents one more reason for Tatar-Russian code switching – *confusing words referring to objects of bilingual reality*. For instance, there are both Tatar and Russian schools in Tatarstan meaning that all school facilities and classroom procedures have both Tatar and Russian names. This is what we call a “bilingual reality”. People frequently use terms in both languages while speaking in one of two languages and they can easily insert lexical items from the other language without noticing it even in the written speech. It should be noted that the Tatar-Russian code switching is possible in the written speech due to the same alphabets (Cyrillic letters) that are used in both Tatar and Russian. This allows Tatars to switch from Tatar to Russian without switching the keyboard mode.

The referential switching is the last reason for the Tatar-Russian code switching in the collected data. There are words or set expressions in the Russian that do not exist in Tatar, and thus Tatars switch to Russian in such cases.

(7) *Вот поперло, так поперло!* [Vot poperla tak poperla] = The thoughts flooded – all words in Russian, instead of using Tatar phrase *kiziksina, chakira bashladilar*.

The Russian colloquial set expression, “*вот поперло, так поперло*”, does not have any equivalent in Tatar. Despite the fact that this set expression is used to show emotions, we should draw the line between phatic and referential switching: In the case of phatic switching, there are equivalents in both languages in their use, whereas the referential switching occurs when the necessary words are missing in a language.

6. Conclusion

Code switching is widespread in bilingual communities, for instance, Tatars who live in Russia and fluently speak two languages– Tatar and Russian. Due to the same alphabets, they can do code switching not only in the oral speech, but also in writing. We analyzed some examples of code switching in Instagram posts by celebrities. The analysis indicated that there could be different reasons for Tatar-Russian code switching: phatic switching; referring to habitual expressions; showing dual identity; opting for international words; referential switching; and confusing words referring to objects of bilingual reality. We found that not only words and set expressions, but also the whole sentences can be code-switched. However, we deal with intra-sentential code switching in most cases: inserting single Russian words into sentences in Tatar (Solnyshkina and Khairullina, 2015) (Tyshchenko Monastyrskaya, 2012).

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