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KODŲ KAITOS RAIŠKA Į LIETUVIŲ KALBOS TEKSTĄ ĮTERPIANT IDIOMINIUS POSAKIUS ANGLŲ KALBA

Code-Switching Through the Embedding of English
Idiomatic Expressions Into the Matrix Lithuanian Text

SUMMARY

The paper focuses on how extra-sentential code-switching occurs when the increasingly multimodal social networks employ and foster the hybrid features of Internet language, especially when it involves idiomatic expressions. The social network “Twitter” has been selected to qualitatively research how English idiomatic expressions are embedded into the matrix of Lithuanian texts by means of extra-sentential code-switching. Six examples are chosen to reflect the flexibility and variety of linguistic features surrounding this process and the diversity of structures resulting from it. An analysis of the examples reveals that there are three main ways of doing so: unmodified idioms, slightly modified idioms, and Lithuanised idioms. This work aims to contribute new observations to the descriptive and analytical aspects of linguistic code-switching research. The work, however, does not include extended commentary of its general effect on language, speakers, and culture.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje analizuojama kodų kaitos raiška, kai multimodalioje socialinių tinklų aplinkoje vartojami idiominių posakiai. Atliekant kokybinę analizę tiriama, kaip įvairiose socialinio tinklo „Twitter“ žinutėse kodų kaitos už sakinio ribų būdu anglų kalbos idiominiai posakiai įterpiami į lietuvių kalbos tekstą. Šešių išrinktų pavyzdžių analizė atskleidžia šio lingvistinio proceso sukurtų konstrukcijų lankstumą bei įvairumą ir rodo, kad tai įmanoma padaryti trimis pagrindiniais būdais: įterpiant nepakeistus, minimaliai pakeistus ir sulietuvintus idiominius posakius. Straipsnyje pateikiamas naujas požiūris į lingvistinius kodų kaitos tyrimus, tačiau jame nėra išsamesnės diskusijos apie šio lingvistinio proceso įtaką kultūrai, kalbos vartotojams ir kalbai apskritai.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: interneto kalba, kodų kaita, įterptiniai idiominiai posakiai, matrikso lietuvių kalba.

KEY WORDS: Internet language, code-switching, embedded idiomatic expressions, matrix Lithuanian.

INTRODUCTION

In bilingualism and language contact research, 'code-switching' (herein abbreviated to 'CS') is significant due to its diverse and complex nature, inherent features, and linguistic structures it creates (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 258; Bell 2013: 113). In the most general and undisputed way, this term may be described as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems" (Gumperz 1982: 59).

In a broader sense, CS is syntactically- and phonologically-consistent, occurs backwards and forwards, involves bilinguals or multilinguals speaking in native and acquired languages to varying extents, and takes place in the context of and during the same act of conversation within the same or different single word, clause, sentence, utterance, discourse, or constituent (Bell 2013: 113; Huang and Milroy 1995: 35). It is a specific linguistic strategy which is used at different times and implies a certain level of linguistic competence (Hudson 1980: 56). Still, the exact definition of CS is still disputed and certain research initiatives tend to "abandon the attempt to find consensus on code switching terminology" (Bell 2013: 113).

Different approaches and models are used to analyse CS, as while some scholars investigate its pragmatic functions and social meanings, others focus on its linguistic constraints (Huang and Milroy 1995: 35). This is due to CS being variable, having numerous types, and functioning distinctly depending on a number of circumstances, thus producing differing

data which is often difficult to summarise (Treffers-Daller 2005: 1476). Since CS involves the concurrent management of multiple languages in a structural, psychological, and social sense, it affects language users themselves in a socially meaningful way and "triggers strong reactions from audiences" (Bell 2013: 113–114). Due to this, it sometimes tends to be pejoratively labelled as a corrupted semi-language despite it being "a routine behaviour in all bilingual and multilingual communities" (Bell 2013: 113–114).

In this paper, CS is thus known as a syntactically, lexically, and phonologically consistent and fluent switch between the matrix Lithuanian language and the embedded English language, performed by interlocutors in the context of a single written conversation (message) when communicating on the Internet social network "Twitter". It is analysed in a linguistic point of view and does not include the related phenomena such as code-mixing, (bilingual) language borrowing, and language quoting.

On its own, 'code' tends to quite often be inadequately described by numerous researchers (Liu 2008: 3–4). Those who define it often consider it as an extensive, yet also a considerably impartial concept of a linguistic variety and a resource that encompasses and groups together not only autonomous languages, but also their numerous varieties, styles, dialects, pidgins, etc. (Liu 2008: 3–4). Learned, chosen, and utilised by monolinguals, bilinguals, and multilinguals, any or all of the mentioned means comprise different sets of codes. These sets are known

as their linguistic repertoire and come in various ranges and levels of diversity, making them difficult to distinguish clearly and reliably (Bell 2013: 104).

In this study, code is a part of CS and includes the matrix Lithuanian language and the embedded English language together with a range of their respective

language resources that their users utilise. As a switchable element, the English language is considered to be acquired, foreign, and mostly subordinate, while the Lithuanian language is considered as native, mostly dominant, and often comprising the major part of the analysed “Twitter” message texts.

THE MATRIX LANGUAGE AND THE EMBEDDED LANGUAGE

A significant part of CS research comes from structural linguistics, with contact linguist C. Myers-Scotton’s (1993) Matrix Language Frame model being commonly used to analyse it. With the main idea that, “in code switching, one or other language will always be dominant”, the dominant language is known as ‘the matrix language’ and “sets the structural frame of a code-switched sentence: the order of elements will be that of the matrix language, which also provides all the necessary structural material’. Meanwhile, the subordinate one is referred to as ‘the embedded language’ and “provides only content material” (Bell 2013: 113–114), enabling the interaction of two grammars (Huang and Milroy 1995: 35). Yet, this model has flaws and receives criticism when it comes to distinguishing the matrix language during more elaborate switching between multiple languages at the same time and proper categorisation of morphemes (Auer 2007). Despite this, this model is used when discussing the role of languages in the analytical part of this study.

Another aspect of CS followed in this paper are the three major types of CS distinguished by the quantitative socio-

linguist S. Poplack (1988: 219), which are: 1) extra-sentential CS (also known as tag switching); 2) intra-sentential CS; and 3) inter-sentential CS.

As the only type of CS included in the analytical part of this paper, extra-sentential CS is known as the syntactically independent insertion of tags from one language into a sentence of another (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 259). It is emblematic because the tags “serve as an emblem of the bilingual character of an otherwise monolingual sentence” and include quotations, interjections, common idiomatic expressions, and filler words or phrases that have a weaker connection with the rest of the sentence and can appear anywhere in it (Appel and Muysken 1987: 118). Due to such tag and single noun switches, it is also considered to be a less intimate type of switching (Poplack 1988).

As it occurs in Internet language, CS is also a subject of computer-mediated communication, which is the linguistic study of the everyday usage of languages through the medium of the computer, the Internet, and similar technologies, where special attention is dedicated to new forms of language and effects of so-

cial media (Herring 1996: 1). While established linguistic theories “cannot capture new forms of multilingual encounters on the web” (Lee 2015: 129), mixed methods encompassing text, ethnographic data, and writing convention analysis are implemented to go beyond the limits of its research (Lee 2015: 129–130).

Internet language is an exceptional composite form of thought expression and has the features of both spoken and written language, and, unlike them, is mostly other-directed (as observed in Internet chats, e-mails, texting, social media, online multiplayer video games, and numerous other online (and sometimes offline) practices). It enables the expression of opinions, attitude, feelings, etc. in a personal, unofficial, spontaneous, unconsidered, and informal way via the specialised use of catchphrases, self-correction, abbreviations, ellipsis, inversion, custom characters, graphical elements, audios, videos, etc. (Crystal 2009). By utilising these features in their writings, language users contribute to the development of an oral culture that expands the creative, functional, and expressive capacity of language (Cross 2011: 89). While switching codes on the Internet and using the various linguistic resources and technological tools available to them, interlocutors effectively control the text they write and often amplify and extend the ideas expressed in text, thus going beyond of only using different languages in numerous contexts during communication (Androustopoulos 2013).

Such code-switches often include idioms, which may be either fixed and static or flexible and able to undergo certain syntactic and lexical modifica-

tions due to their unique form and meaning (Dąbrowska 2018: 2). Their capability of acting not only as a significant part of language, culture, and society, but also being more effective than non-idiomatic expressions due to their close ties with a certain language and culture is especially notable by phraseologists (Dąbrowska 2018: 1). In addition, their role in language seems to be constantly growing, as “the general tendencies of present-day English are towards more idiomatic usage” (Dąbrowska 2018: 1), since it is fundamental in speaking or writing in a certain language, and, especially, describing one’s emotional, psychological, or mental condition (Seidl and McMordie 1978: 1–4). While the definition of this phenomenon tends to vary noticeably, in the context of this paper, it is viewed as:

an institutionalised construction that is composed of two or more lexical items and has the composite structure of a phrase or semi-clause, which may feature constructional idiosyncrasy. [It] primarily has an ideational discourse-function and features figuration, i.e. its semantic structure is derivationally non-compositional. Moreover, it is considerably fixed and collocationally restricted (Langlotz 2006: 5).

While undergoing embedding into matrix Lithuanian text, such code-switched English idioms are often Lithuanised. In linguistics, it is usually understood as the process of linguistically modifying the particular elements of another language in order to adapt it to the Lithuanian language, society, and culture (Maumevičienė 2012: 122). It is quite deeply rooted in Lithuanian language

and society in general, as the constant growth of globalization brings in new terms originating mostly from the English language. Since they are often seen as a possible threat to the Lithuanian language, language scholars produce Lithuanian counterparts to them to combat this issue (Maumevičienė 2012: 122), with the general Lithuanian populace showing interest in this process as well.

Speaking of the contemporary research of idiom use in CS, it is not common as a standalone subject. It is most

often briefly mentioned when analysing other, larger topics discussing the various other aspects of CS, such as its general features, functions, extent, capacity, synergy with Internet language, use in a specialised corpus, role in language preference, as a tool for communication, etc. There is also an opposite situation where idioms are the main focus, while CS is only mentioned briefly, especially when discussing the grammar, lexis, syntax, etc. of a given language with idioms functioning as, for instance, determinants.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research methods that are applied in this paper are of two main types: the criteria of the selection of “Twitter” messages used for the analysis and the criteria of analysing said messages in order to discern the ways code-switched English idiomatic expressions are embedded in the matrix Lithuanian text by means of extra-sentential CS.

Speaking of the first group of criteria, first of all, the “Twitter Advanced Search” tool was configured to search this social network for messages written mainly in Lithuanian, featuring idioms, and containing Lithuanian-English CS, and to arrange them by date from the latest to the oldest and to take their relevance into account. From the provided list, examples meeting certain requirements were handpicked and featured in this paper. The suitable examples are of various length, written by any “Twitter” user, at any date, fulfilling any role in an act of communication, and containing at least one widely known English idiom-

atic expression, which may be found in any major dictionary of the English language. They discuss any topic, are written in any style and grammar, contain any aural or visual media, and feature hash-tags and other special characters. They are primarily written in the matrix Lithuanian language and contain within them the added distinct parts of text that are code-switched to the embedded English language. In them, English hash-tags, widely known and used acronyms, proper names and words derived from them, quotations, hyperlinks, automatically generated text and system messages, and usernames are not considered or analysed as CS specimens.

It was soon noticed that the chosen examples may be further grouped into three distinct groups in accordance to the extent of how severely the grammar and spelling of the embedded code-switched English idiomatic expressions is modified in the matrix Lithuanian text. The first group features the analysis of

two cases of unmodified English idiomatic expressions, the second group includes the investigation of two examples of slightly modified English idiomatic expressions, and the third group involves the examination of two examples encompassing Lithuanised English idiomatic expressions. When analysing each of these examples chosen to effectively reveal the features of each of these groups, the discussed embedded idiom is marked in bold type, while other code-switched English elements are under-

lined and only mentioned briefly. The principles of qualitative analysis are applied to examine each example with the primary aim to discern what grammar and spelling modifications were made to the English idiomatic expressions embedded to the matrix Lithuanian text. The secondary aim is to explicate the location and meaning of the idiom, the grammar, spelling, status, compatibility, and relationship of both the Lithuanian and the English text, and the possible cause of such a situation.

UNMODIFIED ENGLISH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Probably the largest and most prevalent group of examples includes the embedding of the English idiomatic expressions into the matrix Lithuanian text without any further grammar or spelling modifications. Due to each language retaining their original form and functions, clearly-defined boundaries denoting where the English segment starts and ends and where Lithuanian text continues the message are visible. This way of embedding English idioms is the most convenient for message authors, since they do not need to make any further changes to their grammar and spelling for them to better adhere to the Lithuanian text. However, it is also the most contrasting, since there is no gradual transition between the two languages and this apparent feature might disrupt the flow of text for message readers who find such code-switches unexpected, distracting, unacceptable, etc.

1. @wiwalt_2: 'Nu Irishman tai **so so**. Toks jausmas, kad žiūri Senus Bambeklius

vietom' (Source: https://twitter.com/wiwalt_2/status/1201244948517072896. English translation: 'Well The Irishman was **so-so**. It felt as if I were sometimes watching Grumpy Old Men'.)

In this principally Lithuanian message featuring Lithuanian characters (these are 'q', 'č', 'ė', 'ė', 'į', 'š', 'ų', 'ū', and 'ž'), the English idiom 'so-so', meaning something mediocre and neither good nor bad, was embedded at the end of the first sentence. Written without a hyphen between the two 'so' words, it was probably chosen for its brevity and ease of spelling, since it is a single word featured twice and is shorter than its Lithuanian counterparts describing mediocrity – 'taip/šiaip sau', 'pusėtinas', 'pakenčiamas', or 'vidutiniškas' (these translations of the English adjective 'mediocre' are provided in the English-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-English computer dictionary program "Anglonas 2").

2. @zvengiu: 'as kai kazkas papraso my hand sanitizer: ok, but you'll have to repay

with your blood.' (Source: <https://twitter.com/zvengiu/status/1187989517057363968>. English translation: '*Me when someone asks for my hand sanitizer: ok, but you'll have to repay with your blood.*')

Here, the English idiom '*to repay (someone) with something*', meaning the process of compensating someone for a service they provided, was written at the end of the message, in proper English,

SLIGHTLY MODIFIED ENGLISH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Examples containing the use of customised English idioms appear to be rather common and highly variable, since, in such cases, the authors of "Twitter" messages exert their creativity on English idioms with a more or less fixed and established structure. They modify them slightly by adding, removing, or exchanging certain English word or words and thus creating an idiom with a customised form, but still similar to its predecessor. Such formations are usually used to express a certain thought in an enhanced way or more in accordance with the context, participants, circumstances, etc. of a certain piece of transactional communication. Since Internet language is very closely related to the popular Internet culture, which in turn is predominantly English and largely affected by the Western culture, as it often sets new trends to be followed, these modifications of English idioms are often observed there. This culture also endorses the production of new idioms, which are often very recent and only listed in various, often unofficial dictionaries detailing such new linguistic creations (such as "The Urban Dictionary", "Wik-

and without modifying any of its elements, just like the rest of the embedded informal English text, which constitutes the majority of this "Twitter" message. Lithuanian text was used to initiate the message in the first four words, gives way to English, and was written in Latin characters only, thus reflecting the simplification of the grammar and spelling of text to make communication more efficient.

tionary", "NoSlang.com", "NetLingo", "InternetSlang.com", etc.).

1. @AdeleBaris: '*Gal kazkas nori buti mano gf? Like I can shower u w love but where r u?*' (Source: <https://twitter.com/AdeleBaris/status/1193999011751047168>. English translation: '*Does anybody want to be my gf? Like I can shower u w love but where r u?*')

In this two-sentence message, the idiom '*(to) shower someone (or something) with something*', describing the process of bestowing something abundantly or freely to someone, was written in the middle of the second sentence of the message. While the few Lithuanian words were written without Lithuanian characters, the English noun '*girlfriend*' was abbreviated to '*gf*', the personal pronoun '*you*' was shortened to '*u*', and the preposition '*with*' was shortened to '*w*', enabling authors to take advantage from the technologies while communicating and allowing them to express more by using less words.

2. @Kuusas: '*Practice makes it perfect! Jeigu nemesi vairavimo, su laiku tapsi pro ;)*' (Source: <https://twitter.com/Kuusas/status/1200463934567915521>. English translation: '*Practice makes it perfect! If you*

won't drop driving, you'll eventually become a *pro* ;)').

The English idiom '*practice makes perfect*', meaning the improvement of skills due to practicing repeatedly, was slightly modified by adding a redundant pronoun '*it*' between the words '*makes*' and '*perfect*' and constitutes the first sentence of this two-sentence "Twitter" message.

While '*igudimas daro meistrū*' is the Lithuanian counterpart of this idiom, the author probably chose to use the English one as a way to better emphasise the benefits of skill improvement and because it is more prevalent among those who have an understanding of the English language and are more exposed to Western culture.

LITHUANISED ENGLISH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Considerably smaller, but no less notable is the group of examples that contain embedded English idioms modified to possess the features of Lithuanian grammar and spelling. Since Lithuanian is the matrix language, Lithuanisation of the embedded English idioms in order for them to better adapt to the flow of and be more reminiscent of the dominant language seems self-explanatory, as it involves the addition of Lithuanian characters, affixes, endings, words, phrases, etc. These changes range from altering them only minimally to very drastically and virtually turning them into a peculiar middle-language between Lithuanian and English or changing them into Lithuanian text altogether. Very heavily Lithuanised constructions require the interlocutors to be fluent enough in both languages, since they might be difficult to properly comprehend. Finally, such English idiom Lithuanisation is also a demonstration of the message author's language skills, linguistic personality, expressiveness, creativity, attitude, etc., since communication is not the only sole purpose of language.

1. @martynasLTEU: '*Na bratkis ir staigmeną padarė. Aš maniau jog jis su drauge atostogų išvarė į Maldyvous. Bet jis*

ten apsiženyjo. Maloni staigmena. Taip sakant tikras bom šelas. Likau be žado.' (Source: <https://twitter.com/martynasLTEU/status/1159833995695104001>. English translation: '*Well my brother has surprised me greatly. I thought he went on vacation to the Maldives with his girlfriend. But he got married there. A pleasant surprise. A true bombshell so to speak. I was left speechless.*')

The severely shortened, stylised, and Lithuanised form of the English idiom '*(to drop a) bombshell*', meaning the revelation of something very surprising, was used in this five-sentence message. By splitting the English noun '*bombshell*' into two separate nouns '*bomb*' and '*shell*', each of the words were further heavily altered in accordance with certain rules of the spelling and the phonological system of the Lithuanian language by removing or replacing certain original letters with the Lithuanian ones, turning these two words into '*bom šelas*'. Such a transformation reflects the author's linguistic personality, the stylistic choices of text production, and the habit of writing Lithuanian text correctly, thus eventually moving to English text to Lithuanise it.

2. @mesneatleidziam: ‘ai blet *nevermind* as vos prabudus skaiciau ir galvojau kad *posto* esme kad jos drauge susiprato kad ji *bi* ir jai del to nemalonu, galvojau *wtf* kaip piktai sureagavo i *isejima is spintos*’ (Source: <https://twitter.com/mesneatleidziam/status/1171699443177013248>. English translation: ‘Oh damn *nevermind* I read it soon after I woke up and thought the point of the *post* was that her female friend realised she is *bi* and she is uncomfortable about it, I thought *wtf* she reacted to **the coming out of the closet** very angrily’.)

While most of this single-sentence “Twitter” message was written in Lithuanian without Lithuanian characters and

features only a few code-switched English elements such as ‘*nevermind*’, ‘*posto*’, ‘*bi*’, and ‘*wtf*’, the phrase ‘*isejima is spintos*’ is the most notable here. It is an English idiom ‘(to) come out of the closet’ translated directly into Lithuanian and refers to a complicated process of officially identifying oneself as a homosexual person. Since the closest Lithuanian equivalent is a rather awkward and formal phrase ‘*prisipažinimas esant gėjumi (lesbiete)/homoseksualiui/netradicinės seksualinės orientacijos*’, the author chose to translate the English idiom instead, which sounds more natural and even seems to possess an euphemistic effect.

CONCLUSIONS

1. When taking into account the ways how English idiomatic expressions are embedded into the matrix Lithuanian text by means of extra-sentential code-switching in “Twitter” messages, there are three main ways of doing so: by leaving the English idioms unmodified, by applying slight modifications to them, and by Lithuanising them. In all instances, the extent of how severely their grammar and spelling is altered ranges from none to very severe.

2. In each case, English idioms are embedded into the grammatical framework of the Lithuanian language and are located in places where they would naturally be if they were written in Lithuanian. Concurrently, in situations where slight modification occurs, the idioms are altered by exchanging, adding, or removing certain English words from them to change their length, and by

modifying the spelling of their constituent words to be in accordance with the conventions of Internet language, the circumstances of a particular conversation, or the preferences of the language user or the audience. Finally, in occurrences where Lithuanisation takes place, English text is modified to be more reminiscent of Lithuanian text in grammar and spelling (and also possibly punctuation) with the addition of Lithuanian characters, affixes, endings, separate Lithuanian words, etc.

3. These three ways of embedding English idioms reveals that it is possible to code-switch in numerous ways and not only implement a tag of an embedded language into a text of a matrix language, but also apply additional modifications to said embedded element in order to better adapt it to the grammatical framework of the matrix language.

These modifications reveal the immense flexibility of CS as a phenomenon of language contact, which is capable of producing an amazing variety of possible cross-language linguistic structures. Furthermore, it also sheds light on a number of reasons behind such CS, with some of them being a lack of analogous idiomatic expressions in a matrix language, as a means to convey choice of using more than one language, or a demonstration of one's linguistic repertoire and skills. The need to express oneself, show knowledge in the popular Internet culture and communication conventions used there, indicate one's membership in a certain social group or community, build social ties with other interlocutors, etc. are but a few of the other possible causes of CS. In the end, it is quite difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons of

such a unique behaviour, since it seems that every language user has their own purposes of doing so.

4. Future research could use this paper as a reference for a more in-depth qualitative investigation into the ways of how idiomatic phrases of one embedded language may be implemented into another matrix language and could take into account not only their grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but also the effect this linguistic process has on language, speakers, and culture. Such a work could also rely on a larger corpus in order to greatly improve the comprehensiveness of such a study. A larger pool of examples would also make quantitative analysis possible and reveal even more features of not only the embedding of idioms, but also extra-linguistic CS or CS as a whole.

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