



The Codes of Various Languages in the Texts of Latgalian Folk Songs

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Introduction

Latgalian folklore texts are a valuable source of language study and characterize Latgale as the point of the intersection of various languages. One of such intersections is the codes of various languages in the speech of the ethnic majority.

The general meaning of the term [*code*] is “a set of conventions for converting one signalling system into another enters into the subject-matter of semiotics and communication theory rather than linguistics. Such notions as ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ are sometimes encountered in phonetics and linguistics but the view of language as a ‘code’ is not the one that figures greatly in these subjects. The term has come to the fore in sociolinguistics where it is mainly used as a neutral label for any system of communication involving language and which is avoided by sociolinguists having to commit themselves to such terms as dialect, language or variety, which have a special status in their theories” (C r y s t a l 2008, 82).

When people have good knowledge of several languages, the lexical units of various languages can merge in the flow of uninterrupted language. In sociolinguistics, the term *code mixing* refers to the use of two or several languages in communication, unintentionally switching from one language to another. Mostly code mixing can be observed in oral speech when words, phrases, sentence structures, grammar forms, etc. of other languages are combined. Code mixing could be caused by insufficient language skills, speech habits, inability to use the language, other factors. In turn, the term *code switching* refers to the situation when a person is switching, more or less deliberately, from one language, or dialect, or vernacular to another. The switching from one language to another could be partial or complete; the range of code switching could vary from a single word to a speech fragment. Code switching is caused by social, political or economic reasons as well as due to situational circumstances: the specificity of the topic, different language skills of conversation partners, a necessity to refer to an obscure term, the intercultural specificity of discourse. If code switching is deliberate it bears special connotative meaning (B e i k e r s 2002, 74; *VPSV* 2007, 183).

The goal of this paper is to analyse several examples of the codes of various languages in the texts of Latgalian folk songs mainly at lexical level and to answer the question whether its conscious code switching or unconscious code mixing.

The role of a context while interpreting language units is generally seen from two perspectives: on the one hand, linguistic context, i.e. part of the text which is necessary to determine the meaning of the language unit in the text, and, on the other hand, situational context, i.e. a set of extra-linguistic factors (T a l m y 2000). In this study, the contextual approach encompasses both, analysis of linguistic context so as to determine the meaning of lexical units borrowed from another language and analysis of situational context in terms of the functionality of folk song texts.

Codes of different languages in folklore and fiction texts

Other languages have been used for long in folklore as well as in fiction texts as an artistic technique. For instance, macaronic (Latin language *macaronicus*) was a popular poetic form in the 16th–17th century in Europe and words used by “folk” were inserted into Latin texts. In turn, macaronic was used as a literary form in both poetry and prose so as to cause a satirical or entertaining effect in the multilingual Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Didžioji Kunigaikštystė) (L u ž y s 2012, 40).

That is also found in Lithuanian folklore. For instance, such are folk songs recorded in the south of Lithuania when one line is in Lithuanian and another in Polish as if to show bilingualism on the region (A n g l i c k i e n ė 2011, 13).

As for Latvian folklore, some instances of the use of vocabulary of two languages can be detected as well. For example, three Lithuanian language lexemes were found in a folk song recorded in Barta rural municipality, Liepāja region, and included in the chapter “Some modern songs and borrowings” of the electronic collection of Latvian folk songs:

Žamojtelis (*lt*¹ *žemaitėlis* ‘man of Žemaitija’) *jāja* (*lv*² ‘rode’) *Uz to* (*lv* ‘to that’) *žilnojeli* (?*lt* *žalna* ‘troop, army’).
Vīri (*lv* ‘men’), *apsastojat* (*lt* *apsistojate* ‘stop’),
Koja (*lt* *koja* ‘leg’) *teķenē* (*lv* vernacularism). (LTDz 56058, 39)

It is likely that the song was borrowed from Lithuanian folklore and partially adapted.

The most remarkable presence of code switching, the switching from one language, or dialect, or vernacular to another, is demonstrated best in folk anecdotes to reveal various linguistic contacts and comic misunderstandings caused by the lack of language skills. Also, the form of a dialogue in anecdotes is closer to live colloquial speech. For example, in Latgalian anecdotes, both unconscious code mixing so as to produce a humorous effect through interlinguistic homonyms, homophones and a deliberate choice of another language, dialect, vernacular

¹ *lt* – Lithuanian language

² *lv* – Latvian language

and to show a speaker's attitude to his conversation partner are evident. Code switching in anecdotes shows the type of relations between the speakers, their language skills, power and solidarity, the setting of the situation (See further: Kļavinska 2012).

In general, folk songs, compared to other genres of folklore, are one of the most valuable source of linguistic research. Traditional Latvian folk songs date back to the 13th–16th century. However, their texts are quite a complicated source. As it has been proved by a number of folk song researchers, including Pēteris Šmits, Arturs Ozols and others, polychronism is inherent in the language of folk songs, archaic language elements have been preserved due to the rules of style and meter, new elements have been added while improvising (Šmits 1923, 23–24; Ozols 1961, 10). August Leskien and Karl Brugman, the compilers of the collection of Lithuanian folk songs and tales, in the foreword of their work emphasised that the language of folk songs is specific and differs from colloquial language and the vernacular. That difference is determined by both preserved archaisms and the features of the vernacular (Leskien, Brugman 1882, 5).

Linguist Antons Breidaks raised the following problem while recording Latgalian folk songs. Folklore recorders often try to transform the vernacular into literary language, on the other hand, if a folklore text recorder knows the vernacular well, material could be very valuable. Therefore folklore material firstly has to be critically evaluated and only then used in linguistic studies (Breidaks 2007, 404).

Analysing folklore texts recorded in the Latvian Latgalian vernaculars, the author of the paper has faced the problem of differentiating lexical borrowings and lexis of other languages (mainly Russian, Belarusian, Polish). A borrowing is a unit, word, word group, word part, etc. borrowed from another language. Borrowings usually obey the grammatical norms and word formation rules of the recipient language (VPSV 2007, 21). In this research, the lexemes that are not subject or are partially subject to the norms of the Latvian Latgalian vernaculars, were considered codes of other languages. However, due to the variety and migration of the vernaculars, in some instances it may be difficult to differentiate the codes of other languages from the vernaculars.

The research is built on the texts of folk song in the Latvian Latgalian vernaculars recorded in the 1920s–1930s and containing the lexical codes of other languages (See: list of sources).

Intentional code switching or unintentional code mixing?

The research into code switching in the texts of Latgalian folk songs was inspired by the folk songs recorded in Osuna (present Asūnes) rural municipality, Daugavpils district, published in 1924 in the newspaper “Izglītības Ministrijas mēnešraksts”, and containing many words semantics of which at first glance seem obscure. Context analysis allowed to identify the likely origin and semantics of many lexemes, however, many still remained unclear:

Čuku, čuku, čukoda [refrain],
Nikas mani navede [*ltg*³ ‘no one marries me’],
Kab kas mani vastu [*ltg* ‘if someone marries me’],
Visi [*ltg*, *lt* ‘all’] *geri* (*lt geri* ‘well’) *rostu* [*ltg* ‘found’]
Div [*ltg* ‘two’] *kišini* (*lt kišinės* ‘pockets’) *krapu* (*lt krapų* ‘dills’ (plural, genitive case)),
Trešs [*ltg* ‘the third’] *čaraviku* (*bel*⁴ *чарасік* ‘shoe’),
Div kuboly veizu [*ltg* ‘two cauldrons of bast shoes’],
Trešs baraviku [*ltg* ‘the third – bolete mushroom’].
Šapineica, trapineica (?)
Ša tev [*ltg* ‘here you are’] *pikta vira* (? *lt pikta vyrą* ‘angry husband’ (singular, accusative case)),
Aiz galdeņa sādādama [*ltg* ‘sitting behind the table’],
Kai [*ltg* ‘alike’] *barzalas mira* (?).
Namergelas, namergelas [*?lt ne meregelės* ‘not girls’]
As veļ na tova [*ltg* ‘I am not yet yours’],
Kad nūjēmsi [*ltg* ‘when you will take off’] *vainukeli* (lietuviešu val. *vainikėlį* ‘chaplet’ (singular, accusative case)),
Tad as byušu tova [*ltg* ‘then I will be yours’].
Žāli [*lt žali* ‘green’] *man i* [*ltg* ‘my’] *vainukeļi* [*lt vainikėliai* ‘chaplets’],
Pa upeiti plòvoj [*ltg* ‘float in the river’],
Bolti muni [*ltg* ‘my white’] **namiteli** [*? lt nuometeliai* ‘head scarfs’]
Osareņas slauka [*ltg* ‘wipe tears’]. (*IMM* 1924, 176)

By thematic classification, it is an example of marriage songs. The lexemes of the Latvian and Lithuanian languages (more precisely, their vernaculars, since oral folklore texts mainly function in the vernaculars) and, in one instance, a lexeme of the Belarusian language, which could be considered a borrowing, dominate in the text. However, a few phonetic or morphological modifications (for instance, *namiteli* – likely *nuometeliai* in Lithuanian, ‘head scarfs’; *namergelas* – *ne meregelės* in Lithuanian, ‘not girls’, etc.) do not indicate that these lexemes were borrowed, they were rather adopted on the basis of pronunciation heard or adapted by their narrators. There is a significantly common layer of inherited Baltic lexis; yet, some particular phonetic or morphological codes indicate the presence of the Lithuanian language, for example, the diminutive *vainukeļi* mentioned above, ‘chaplets’ (*vainadziņi* in the Latvian literary language, *vainadzeni*, *vainuceni* in the Latgalian vernaculars, *vainikėliai* in Lithuanian, also *vainukėliai* in the Lithuanian vernaculars) has the suffix *-el-*, which should be considered the code of the Lithuanian language.

Hypothetically, it can be assumed that this text was borrowed from Lithuanian folklore, though, after consultations with Lithuanian folklore and ethnography experts, no existence of any Lithuanian version of this folk song was detected. Therefore it can be assumed only hypothetically that, in this instance, unconscious code mixing, which had occurred while adapting the text, can be observed.

³ *ltg* – Latgalian vernaculars of Latvian language

⁴ *bel* – Belarusian language

It is possible to find more reliable proofs of intentional code switching of other languages in the corpus of Latgalian folk songs. For example, in a teasing song recorded in Gaigalava (Bikova) rural municipality, Rezekne district, and published in 1936:

Andrivam bruoleišam [ltg ‘my brother Andrivs’]
Dakazāji [ru⁵ доказали ‘was found’] *naudas daudz* [ltg ‘having a lot of money’];
Sip pa boļše, sip pa boļše, nāžeļej [ru сын побольше, сын побольше, не жалей ‘pour more, pour more, do not grudge’]!
Vašim, kašu [ru вашим кашу ‘porridge for your people’] *vuorejūt* [ltg ‘cooking’],
Perednīks [ltg ‘apron’] **izgarel** [ru изгорел ‘burned off’]. (LTDz 113)

Here Russian words and phrases have been incorporated to produce a humorous effect characteristic of teasing songs. The lexeme *perednīks* in this text has to be considered a borrowing (*передник* in Russian, ‘apron’), the suffix with the ending *-nīks* inherent in the Latgalian vernaculars was added, as well as a typical emphasis on the first syllable in pronunciation.

Similarly, the influence of the Polish language (the Polish dialect of Latgale) is seen in humorous folk songs, e.g., in a folk song recorded in Dagda rural municipality, Daugavpils district, and published in 1936:

Kristamāmeņ, dzjadzuliņ [ltg ‘Godmother, aunt’],
Kai [ltg ‘how’] **pa poļsku** [pol po polsku ‘in Polish’] **havaric** [? bel гаварыць ‘to speak’]!
čuda čuda, dzīva dzīva [pol cudo, dziwo ‘miracle’]
Ja pa poļsku [pol ja po polsku ‘I in Polish’] **havarila** [? bel гаварыла ‘spoke’]:
Sīvyi koņ, jasna grīva [pol siwy koń, jasna grzywa ‘grey horse, light mane’],
Pakausteiti kumeliņi [ltg ‘shod colts’]. (LTDz 56050, 78)

In this example, we see some words of the Polish vernacular of Latgale as they were heard, e.g., *pa polsku* (K u n i c k a 2014, 135–136). An explanation why the Polish *mówić* ‘to speak’ was substituted with the Belarusian *гаварыць* ‘to speak’ is that words of the Belarusian language were widely used in the peripheral Polish vernaculars, especially in low colloquial. The texts of the folk song discussed above were recorded in the first half of the 20th century in various pagasts of Latgale county, both in the border area and in the middle of Latgale. Presence of words from other languages, Polish, Russian, Lithuanian, Belarusian, shows that these languages were used by the ethnic minorities who lived in Latgale in the first half of the 20th century: according to the census of 1930 the structure of Latgale population was the following: Latvians made up 56.89%, Russians – 27.45%, Poles – 5.49%, Jews – 5.30%, Belarusians – 4.12%, Germans – 0.18%, Lithuanians – 0.18%, Estonians – 0.07%, others – 0.31% of its population. (TSK 1930).

⁵ ru – Russian language

Conclusions

The analysed examples show that the incorporation of different language lexis in folk song texts is characteristic not only of Latgale, similar linguistic processes occurred in other border areas and historically bilingual or multilingual regions. Problems while identifying the code of other languages in Latgalian folk songs are related to the variety of the Latvian Latgalian vernaculars and of the Latgalian dialect used by other ethnic minorities of Latgale. The variety of lexical codes is seen not only in speech of Latgalians but also of Poles, Russians and other ethnic minorities living in Latgale. Moreover, a specific character of folk songs, i.e. their polychronism and migration, enhance the presence of the codes of various languages, dialects and vernaculars.

The examples of the codes of various languages were identified in the corpus of folk songs recorded mainly in the first half of the 20th century in various rural municipalities of Latgale, both in the border area and its central part. The Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Belarusian languages, the languages spoken by the ethnic minorities of Latgale, are the source of lexical interference in Latgalian folk songs.

The examples provided show that in folk songs: code mixing and code switching are linked with the content and origin of them; code switching is mostly a deliberate action; lexis of other languages were incorporated to produce a humorous effect; unintentional code mixing shows that folk songs were borrowed and migrated.

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Antra Kļavinska

Īvairių kalbų kodai Latgalos liaudies dainų tekstuose

S a n t r a u k a

Pagrindinēs sąvokos: *Latgalos liaudies dainos, kodų maišymas, nesąmoninga kodų kaita.*

Straipsnio tikslas – leksiniu aspektu, remiantis Latgalos liaudies dainų pavyzdžiais, išanalizuoti keletą įvairių kalbų kodų ir atsakyti į klausimą, ar tai yra sąmoningas kodų maišymas, ar nesąmoninga kodų kaita.

Atlikta kontekstinė analizė, t. y. išanalizuotas lingvistinis kontekstas, siekiant nustatyti kalbinius vienetų, kaip kitos kalbos skolinius, ir situacinė analizė, t. y. išanalizuotas liaudies dainų tekstų funkcionalumas.

Išvados: 1) įvairių kalbų kodų buvo rasta tose liaudies dainose, kurios užrašytos XX a. pirmojoje pusėje įvairiuose Latgalos regiono valsčiuose, pasienyje ir centrinėje dalyje; 2) latvių, lenkų, rusų, baltarusių kalbos, kuriomis kalba Latgalos etninės mažumos, yra leksinės interferencijos šaltinis Latgalos liaudies dainose; 3) kodų maišymo ir kodų kaitos pavyzdžiai rodo, kad tai susiję su dainos turiniu ir jos kilme; kodų kaita yra beveik nesąmoningas veiksmas; kitos kalbos žodžiai dainose vartojami, kad sukeltų humoristinį efektą; nesąmoninga kodų kaita rodo, jog daina buvo pasiskolinta ir migravo.

Kodu maišymas ir kodų kaita – būdingas reiškinys ne tik Latgaloje, panašūs lingvistiniai procesai stebimi ir kituose paribio rajonuose, kurie istoriškai yra dvikalbiai ir daugialkalbiai. Liaudies dainų specifiškumas, polichroniškumas ir migravimas skatina kitų kalbų kodų atsiradimą.

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The goal of this paper is to analyze several examples of the codes of various languages in the texts of Latgalian folk songs (mainly at lexical level) and to find an answer to the question whether it is conscious code switching or unconscious code mixing.

The contextual approach has been used in the study, i.e. analysis of both, linguistic context so as to identify lexical units borrowed from other languages, and of situational context in terms of the functionality of folk song texts.

The main conclusions: 1) the analysed examples of the codes of various languages were identified in the corpus of folk song texts recorded in the first half of the 20th century in various pagasts of Latgale, both in the border area and its central part; 2) the Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Belarusian languages, the languages spoken by the ethnic minorities of Latgale, are the source of lexical interference in Latgalian folk songs; 3) the examples of code mixing and code switching show that they are linked with the content and origin of folk songs; code switching is mostly a deliberate action; lexis of other languages were incorporated to produce a humorous effect; unintentional code mixing shows that folk songs were borrowed and migrated.

Code switching and code mixing are characteristic not only of Latgale, similar linguistic processes can be observed in other border regions, which are historically bilingual and multilingual. The specificity of folk songs, their polychronism and migration, enhance the use of the codes of various languages.

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