

## THE DIGITAL DISCOURSE OF ADOLESCENTS IN KOSOVO: ALBANIAN-ENGLISH CODE-SWITCHING AND EMOTIONAL ENCODING

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, we will address the main elements of the digital discourse of adolescents in Kosovo, with particular attention to Albanian-English code-switching and the means of emotional encoding. The language used by adolescents does not have any specific rules of formation, but it is created by certain groups and used in certain places.

Given the intensive use of social networks and messaging applications, young people are inclined to create words or their own communication network by shortening words, taking words from foreign languages, combining elements of standard language, anglicisms, youth slang, expressing emotions through graphic signs such as emoji, accented punctuation and graphemic extensions.

The study will be based on qualitative research and analysis of adolescent communication on social networks in public comments and fragments of conversations provided voluntarily by groups of adolescents.

The research results show that code-switching and emotional encoding are not entirely random and unintentional. They are created for group identification and emotional expression.

The paper argues that digital communication with Albanian-English code-switching does not constitute a “degeneration” of the standard language but rather indicates a parallel communication system and functional evolution that is closely linked to youth identity and cultural globalization.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Kosovo, code-switching, emotional encoding.

### INTRODUCTION

Human beings as social beings encompasses a very broad meaning, they belong to a concrete society and enter social life through social groups.

Among the main factors of human socialization after the family, society is considered, which pushes human beings into continuous relationships with other people.

Another very important factor of human socialization is the peer group with whom he creates valuable relationships based on more pronounced common values.

A connecting bridge for establishing these relationships is undoubtedly language, without which human society could not develop because it represents the basic form of communication between people. In other words, to communicate means to live, and to live means to communicate.

As in the whole world, in Kosovo, nowadays the use of social networks has become an irreplaceable habit. Social networks are a fast method of communication and have an impact on shaping the personal life and the way young people live.

## THEORETICAL PART

Spoken language differs from written language. In the science of spoken language, there is also room to research the ethnography of speech, which deals with: variants of language use, speech situations, the influence of non-linguistic factors on language, such as: educational and cultural factors, communication culture, language contacts, language education in school, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The language used in digital communication does not adhere to the rules of the linguistic standard and the spelling rules of the Albanian language. The linguistic standard is a special variant of the national language of a linguistic community, which has a higher status than other variants. The standard language embodies the strict implementation of the entirety of the norms, as well as the phonetic, lexical, grammatical rules of the Albanian language, which are mandatory for all speakers, regardless of the environment: academic, political, media and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, the standard language serves as a common model of communication for all speakers of a language.

Just as spoken language has several variants and they influence each other, written language also has its variants. and here we must bear in mind that not all users of written language know the standard language well.

Language as a special social phenomenon has a very complex combination and construction. Seeing language as a social phenomenon that changes continuously over time in the field of Albanian, linguistic changes of the lexical, phonetic, morphological, syntactic levels are observed. They become the object of study and interpretation, enriching the Albanian language with productive flows.<sup>3</sup> These developments become the object of study for linguistics, since through them the adaptation of language to new linguistic and cultural realities is understood. In this context, a visible phenomenon in the contemporary use of language is also the discourse of young people. The most visible and dominant linguistic phenomenon of youth culture is free discourse. Careless discourse, as part of Albanian student jargon, is little studied and complete data in this regard is lacking. Meanwhile, foreign researchers have documented the use and functioning of this discourse, as a distinctive feature of close social groups.<sup>4</sup> In this context, we have focused on the digital discourse of adolescents in Kosovo, such as Albanian-English code-switching and emotional coding, to highlight their way of communicating and the distinctive features of this communication. This discourse is characterized by the use of various linguistic elements such as youth slang, abbreviations, Albanian-English code-switching and the use of graphic tools to express emotions. Any generalization about the use of language by young people is directly related to the similarities of the situations in which young people use their language.<sup>5</sup> In the last decade, many youth identities have been created, which are distinguishable from each other in the style of clothing, music, language used, etc. At the beginning of the 21st century, we are all witnesses of technological development and the impact it has had on our lives and especially on young people who have adapted to technological innovations and at the same time have created new styles of youth culture. So, language has acquired new forms and uses, which mark socio-cultural realities and contexts.<sup>6</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The study will rely on qualitative research and analysis of discourse and thematic categorization of adolescent communication on social networks in public comments and conversation snippets voluntarily provided by adolescent groups.

<sup>1</sup> Gjinari, J., & Shkurtaç, G., *Dialectology*, Tirana, 2003, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> D, Chrystal-D., *Davy, Investigating English Style*, London, 1969, f. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Durmishi, G., *Linguistic culture and territorial stratifications that influence the variants of standard Albanian as a sociolinguistic phenomenon*, Korçë, 2013, p. 380.

<sup>4</sup> Bucholtz, M., *Globalization: language and youth culture*, United States. 2000, f. 283.

<sup>5</sup> Eckert, P., *Adolescent language*, New York, 2003 f. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Bucholts M., *Globalization: language and youth culture*. North Carolina, 2000, f. 281.



**DATA ANALYSIS**

Conversation fragment

A: “Po shkojmë në party?” A: “Are we going to the party?”  
 B: “Nuk e di, maybe 😎” B: “I don’t know, maybe 😎”  
 A: “Ok por duhet me decide 😊” A: “Ok but you have to decide 😊”

Element	Observation	Function
“Po shkojmë në nejë?”	Albanian, leading question	Open the discussion
“Nuk e di, maybe 😎”	Albanian-english code-switching “maybe”	Express uncertainty and emoji to convey an emotion of coolness and relaxation
“Ok por duhet me decide 😊”	Albanian-english code-switching “ok” and “decide”	Express mild concern and emoji to reinforce emotion

**Albanian -English switching-code**

Below are public comments on social media:

1: O ju duaaaaa Loni Eliiiii 🍑 we all are waiting new video with eliiii 😊👉❤️❤️ I love you Loni Eliiiii 🍑 we all are waiting new video with eliiii 😊👉❤️❤️
2: Kthema cm o yllllll 🍑 give me back my comment o starrrrrr 🍑
3: Loniii we love you zemraaa ❤️ Loniii we love you hearttt ❤️
4: PEJA TRIP??? 🍑🍑 BONI VLOG PEJA TRIP??? 🍑🍑 MAKE VLOG
5: Ka mu Ba international dance veq prit 🍑😂🍑🍑🍑🍑🍑 Ludo king This will be an international dance, just wait 🍑😂🍑🍑🍑🍑🍑 Ludo king
6: Djale King Respekt nga Kosova King Boy Respect from Kosovo
7: I have this problem too zemra mos u merzit 😊 I have this problem too sweetheart don’t be sad 😊
8: Hahahahaha o spo muj mo how are you 71 o Boss Hahahahaha oh I can’t anymore how are you 71 oh Boss
9: “hellooo babbbbb” ✨ “hellooo daddddd” ✨
10: rizza o llegend long live riza rizza is the legend long live riza
11: It's funny 😊ama edhe dangerous 😊 It's funny 😊but and dangerous 😊
12: se kuptoj pse disa njerez e shajne stresin ky o king m vlla 😊❤️❤️ I don’t understand why some people curse stress, he is king my brother 😊❤️❤️
13: Ti ma ndreq ditën ✨ You make my day ✨
14: o trinto gjall je e vlla Oh trinti, are you alive, brother

In these examples, a combination of the structures of both languages is observed, where one part of the communication is done in Albanian and the other part is done in English. So, we have the Albanian-English code-switching where we understand that English is used to express assessments and emotional expressions.

- *O ju duaaaaa Loni Eliiiii 🍊 we all are waiting new video with eliiii*
- *Loniii we love you zemraaa*
- *I have this problem too zemra mos u merzit*
- *It's funny 😄 ama edhe dangerous 😬*
- *how are you 71 o Boss*

### ***Graphemic extensions and intensification of emotions***

Another element that stands out in these digital communications is the graphemic extension of words and the intensification of emotions. These graphemic extensions have no grammatical function, but are simply used to express enthusiasm, love or closeness to the person they are addressed to, that is, they are used to show that the person writing wants to emphasize or call out someone or something.

- *duaaaaa*
- *Eliiiii*
- *yllllll*
- *zemraaa*
- *babbbbb*

### ***Emotional coding represented through emojis and graphic signs***

Another striking feature of adolescents' digital communication is the frequent use of emojis and graphic signs. Emojis transmit social and emotional information and at the same time increase the richness and depth of digital conversations. These signs function as a parallel communication system because they complement or replace elements of written language and represent different emotions such as: appreciation, enthusiasm, humor, love and support, security, uncertainty, dissatisfaction, prayer, etc.

- 🍊
- ❤️
- 🤝
- 🙏
- ✨
- 😎
- 😄
- 😂
- 😊
- 🍷

### ***Youth slang as a group identity***

In some examples, the use of youth slang is also observed, which is very characteristic of adolescents. Slang serves as a sign of a group identity and is also used to express respect, friendship or admiration for the person mentioned. Comments such as:

- *o llegend*
- *e vlla*
- *o king*
- *o Boss*

### ***Shortening of sentence structure***

In these types of communications, words and sentences are shortened and shortened, ignoring any grammatical rules. Here, speed and spontaneity of reaction are more important. Even the use of capital letters is very rare, only in cases where they want to emphasize something. Such examples are:

- *PEJA TRIP???* 🍷🍷🍷 *BONI VLOG*
- *o trinto gjall je e vlla*
- *rizza o llegend long live riza*

### **CONCLUSIONS**

From the analysis of the material collected on the digital discourse of adolescents in Kosovo, such as Albanian-English code-switching and emotional coding, several conclusions can be drawn:

- The digital communication of adolescents in Kosovo is characterized by Albanian-English code-switching. This phenomenon is related to the dominance of English in communication in digital spaces and cultural globalization.
- The digital discourse of adolescents contains a pronounced emotional coding, presented through graphemic extensions, the use of emojis and graphic signs. These tools are used for a more expressive and lively communication.
- The use of youth slang and the shortening of the sentence structure shows that language in digital communication serves as a tool for building group identity and strengthening connections between peers.

In conclusion, the language used in adolescents' digital communication does not adhere to the rules of the linguistic standard and the basic norms of Albanian spelling, but argues that digital communication with Albanian-English code-switching does not constitute a "degeneration" of the standard language, but rather it shows a parallel communication system and functional evolution that is closely linked to youth identity and cultural globalization.

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