

The Phenomenon of Code-Mixing as Practised in Online Newspapers for Vietnamese Youth and the Issue of Preserving the Purity of Vietnamese

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Currently, code-mixing is a very popular phenomenon in young people's communication. Code-mixing is not only a pure linguistic phenomenon but a perceived phenomenon in linguistic-cultural contact. In this article, we will conduct research on the phenomenon of code-mixing in online articles for Vietnamese youth to find out the types of code-mixing that young people use in online newspapers, thereby raising the issue of protecting, developing and "preserving the purity of Vietnamese" so that Vietnamese still embraces the identity of the Vietnamese cultural language but does not hinder the current integration and internationalisation.

Key words: *Code-mixing, Preserving the Purity of Vietnamese, Youth and Online Newspapers.*

INTRODUCTION

Contact language is one of the common linguistic phenomena in the development history of languages in the world. E. Sapir (1949) asserted that "it is very difficult to find a completely isolated language or dialect, even among primitive peoples" (p.210). This indirectly shows that languages are seldom complete by themselves but often have to be imported or borrowed from other languages. The process of language contact has created consequences at different levels, such as the influence from one language to another, interaction between languages, borrowing of elements between languages, language interference, code-mixing or code-switching, and so forth.

Currently, code-mixing is a very popular phenomenon in young people's communication. This phenomenon has contributed to a disturbance in contemporary Vietnamese life and created controversial public opinions. Therefore, code-mixing is not only a pure linguistic

phenomenon but a perceived phenomenon in linguistic-cultural contact. In this article, we will study the phenomenon of code-mixing in online articles for Vietnamese youth to find out the types of mixing codes used by young people in electronic newspapers, thereby raising the issue of protecting, developing and "preserving the purity of Vietnamese" so that Vietnamese still embraces the identity of the Vietnamese cultural language but does not hinder the current integration and internationalisation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In communication, depending on the communication situation as well as the communication needs, people can choose communication codes with two common forms: code-switching or code-mixing. Code-mixing is a phenomenon closely related to code-switching, so this concept sometimes does not have a clear distinction. In the article "Bilingual speech: A typology of code-mixing", Pieter Muysken (2000) stated that the term "code-mixing" refers to "all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence" , and "restricting the term code-switching to a subset of code-mixing" (p. 678). Muysken also asserted that code-mixing is an impossible principle in bilingual theory and that three code-mixing strategies are the escape hatches of this theory. These three strategies include: insertion (inserting a word or phrase from one language into the structure of another language), alternation (alternating between the structures of the two languages) and congruent lexicalisation (verifying the vocabulary of the document from the vocabulary into common grammatical structures). Thus, Muysken aims to assert that code-mixing is a generalisation phenomenon. In contrast with Muysken's point of view, Bokamba (1988) and David (2008) claim that code-switching or code-mixing are two heterogeneous phenomena in which code-switching is a complete switching of one language to another, while code-mixing is a phenomenon that involves more of a grammatical issue. Nguyen Van Khang in "Social Linguistics" (2012) claimed that code-mixing carries both code-switching and borrowing and is considered the product of cultural fusion.

In this article, we conceive of code-mixing as mixing components of language code A into language code B. These components can be words, phrases, even a sentence. Thus, according to this concept, code-mixing is a phenomenon that includes code-switching and borrowing. Such a concept, in our opinion, will be easy to study because currently, code-mixing is not only a phenomenon of pure language but also a phenomenon of cultural and social life.



RESEARCH METHODS

Statistical method

This method is used for statistics of the phenomenon of code-mixing in some online newspapers for Vietnamese young people such as kenh14.vn, hoahoctro.tienphong.vn, svvn.tienphong.vn and so forth.

The method of analysis – synthesis

This method is used to analyse the statistical results, from which to draw conclusions about the current situation of using language in the form of code-mixing by Vietnamese youth in online newspapers.

The method of classification

On the theoretical basis of code-mixing as well as statistical data obtained about specific code-mixing cases, the article has classified the typical code-mixing, thereby analysing and clarifying the advantages and disadvantages of this phenomenon.

The method of description

This method is used in combination with the analytical method to describe the survey results.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Some common types of code-mixing

As mentioned above, code-mixing occurs most commonly in the form of insertion. Insertion of words from one language into the structure of another language during communication and using language is considered one of the "criteria" of the process of code-mixing. This type of insertion occurs in some basic cases such as word insertion; phrase insertion; clause insertion; and expression/ idiom insertion, etc. Below is a statistic table of some typical English code-mixing words appearing in online newspapers for young people such as kenh14.vn, hoahoctro.tienphong.vn, svvn.tienphong.vn and so forth.

Table 1.

NO.	Code-mixing	Context	Form
1	Netizen	Recently, however, Cam Dan has suddenly found some strange details by some <i>netizens</i> in her photo posted on Facebook (Article: A series of beautiful girls with super powers that distort things: Beauty is for real but who doesn't want to be more beautiful, kenh14.vn February 26, 2021)	Word insertion
2	Style	The <i>couple</i> GD and Jennie's unique <i>style</i> is not in dressing, but also clearly manifested through their "stunned" hairstyles. (Article: G-Dragon and Jennie are the "king and queen" of unusual hairstyles, and girls are sometimes inspired by men, kenh14.vn , February 25, 2021).	Word insertion
3	Couple		Word insertion
4	Visual	In EXO, Kai is also a member with outstanding <i>visual</i> (appearance) with a height of 182cm (Article: Jennie's boyfriends (BLACKPINK): Full of brand ambassadors for prestigious brands, hoahoctro.tienphong.vn , February 24, 2021)	Word insertion
5	Drama	MV "We of the Present" launches, drama between Son Tung M-TP and GC has been resolved? hoahoctro.tienphong.vn 24/02/2021.	Word insertion
6	Showbiz	Married to a young man 11 years younger, this is a rare happy "cougar and cub couple" that has been "scorned" the most in Vietnamese <i>showbiz</i> , svvn.tienphong.vn 23/02/2021	Word insertion
7	View	Hanoi female student triggers storms with a "sweet" voice and a series of cover videos with millions of <i>views</i> svvn.tienphong.vn 23/02/2021.	Word insertion
8	Beauty-biz	Japan, Korea, America, France are often familiar countries in the <i>beauty-biz</i> of Vietnamese young people. (Article: Discovering a maze of Chinese domestic cosmetics: Which brand is good? Which one should be avoided?)	Phrase insertion
9	Order	Do not think Chinese clothes as cheap by default, consider carefully when choosing some common types found on the <i>order</i> groups such as "Palette 89K", "powder coating 99K", " <i>mascara</i> 39K" Article: Discovering a maze of Chinese domestic cosmetics: Which brand is good? Which one	Word insertion

		should be avoided? Hoahoctro.tienphong.vn 18/02/2021)	
10	Item	Spending on different <i>items</i> (Article: 10 tips to own a wardrobe to wear always, not afraid of being old, hoahoctro.tienphong.vn 08/01/2021).	Word insertion

Word insertion:

Case 1: Inserting words with identifiable meanings for a new type of thing or phenomenon

This case often appears in the fields of Fashion, Cinema, Cosmetics, etcetra, because in these fields there is often the introduction of trends, types of fashion, cinema, cosmetics and the beauty of young people in the world.

Example 1. Not long ago, Yoona made an impression with gentle and graceful clothes. The goddess chose for herself a lotus-leaf dress and *layer cardigan* in ton sur ton outside, creating a harmonious and beautiful overall. (Article: *In the same cardigan of 57 million VND: Yoona looks girly when mixing dresses, Sooyoung looks simple but youthful* - kenh14.vn February 16, 2021)

Example 2. Saving is just by way, not the main reason for this trend. The big trend of current fashion is *retro* in which people look to the past in search of fashion inspiration. For some, it is a passion and they have a huge passion for buying *secondhand clothes*.

Example 3. Many people used to dislike wearing someone's old clothes, but times have gradually changed, now *vintage* goods take the throne, and hunting a beautiful classic Saint Laurent *blazer* for just over 1 million is too good; and when wearing it and posting pictures on Instagram, you get a lot of hearts. It is time to forget what you used to think about buying secondhand items and clothes, because now it's the cool "hunting for *vintage* items". (Article: *Forget what you used to think about secondhand items, Gen Z's shopping trend is now "hunting for vintage items"* - hoahoctro.tienphong.vn 07/02/2021).

Example 4. If the weather turns warm, try wearing shorts with a T-shirt and exterior blazer, and low-neck boots, you will have a seductive look. (Article: *Tong Thien is about to turn 40, but always looks young thanks to 11 super-stylish and age-hacking tips*, - kenh14.vn 16/02/2021).

The words inserted in the above examples are all names of styles and types of fashion (blazer: jacket is designed based on a suit jacket but is modified with seams to bring a variety of more designs and comfort to wearers; cardigan: woven woollen coats with buttons on the front; shorts: short pants from the knees upwards; boots: shoes covering the entire foot and lower leg); words to name styles and fashion trends (*vintage*: fashion styles retained from the past;

retro: fashion styles that revive things from 20 years ago; secondhand: old used items liquidated by sellers; layer: combination of multiple layers of clothes in overall. These are all styles and fashion trends of international youth imported to Vietnam, so using Vietnamese words to express these styles and trends is sometimes not available or if any, it requires specific interpretation through free expression.

Case 2: inserting words prevalently used by young people. These real words often appear in the vocabulary fields of the fields, such as Music (concert, show, cover, follow, showbiz, clip, view, solo, debut, fan, comeback, anti-hit, remix, viral, beat, edit, idol, mixtape, teaser clip, encore, trend, etcera); Movies (series, equipe, scandal, netizen, preview, drama, happy ending, etcera); Fashion (outfit, sexy, style, body, mix, stylist, model, concept, cool, trendy, item, cushion, make up, combo, skincare, scrub, etcera); Life (nickname, healthy, rich kid, hot girl, take away, fail, brand, etcera).

Example 1. SM's new girl group – Aespa is one of the groups drawing huge attention from *netizens*. Just after their debut, the four girls attracted a large *fan* base and often wore expensive brands. (Article: *Aespa is very attentive to popular cosmetics, come and see series of cool items* - kenh14.vn February 17, 2021).

Example 2. Goon Yard is a Korean-style coffee shop with a modern and youthful design, impressively reminiscent of the Common Ground area made from super cool containers of Seoul youth. Not only impressing with the unique *concept* full of personality symbolising the industrial development of Can Tho City, the space inside the restaurant is also lovely *decorated*, suitable for young people who love to experience new feelings. (Article: *Can Tho youths check in so cool with Seoul Common Ground's background exactly the same as in Korea* - hoahoctro.tienphong.vn 13/02/2021).

Example 3. The Penthouse: War in Life is one of the *hottest* South Korean television series in 2020. With a charismatic, *dramatic* and intriguing script starring a talented *cast*, The Penthouse: War in Life 2 is expected to be fierce and to have tempting fights for power. So, before officially enjoying the dramatic war of the Hera Palace residents, let's review the following knowledge to get ready to "gossip" about the upcoming season 2! (Article: *A few things to remember before binge-watching Penthouse 2: From the killer killing the official wife to the tragedy of the rich kids, don't forget anything!* - kenh14.vn 19/02/2021).

Netizen, debut, fan, concept, décor, check-in, background, hot, cast, drama, etcetera are all common words used in the form of insertion in the speech of Vietnamese youth. These words all have the equivalent Vietnamese word (different from the words in case 1), but due to the convenience as well as the trend in usage, young Vietnamese people now often choose to use them.

Phrase insertion:

The case of inserting English phrases into Vietnamese text appears less, and is less common than word insertion. Below are some examples:

Example 1. It is better that this set is currently being sold in Zara Vietnam for less than VND 500,000. So, if you want to have a *cheap moment* with your idol, why don't you go and buy it? (Article: Jennie just wore a super pretty Zara set, with a sale price of less than VND 500,000 - kenh14.vn).

Example 2: The shops in the central area are closed or just sell *take-away* items. (Article: Hanoi on the fifth of the Lunar New Year is just like the first day: Quiet shops, crowded streets - kenh14.vn, 16/02/2021).

Example 3. GOT7 and JYP were thought to have had a disagreement, but the message of "Daddy Park" for the *main vocalist* before leaving the company revealed their true relationship - kenh14.vn 21/02/2021.

Example 4: The actress makes good use of trendy, *mix & match* items in very interesting and effective age-hacking tips (Article: Tong Thien is about to turn 40, but always looks young thanks to 11 super-stylish and age-hacking tips - kenh14.vn 16/02/2021).

There are also many other phrases such as *level max*, *hot hit*, *sale up to*, *tips mix*, *mash-up*, *minigame* and so on. It is noticeable that fixed phrases like take away, make up, mash-up and so on often are preferred in the form of code-mixing over free phrases. For free phrases, users can either use in the form of code-mixing or not. Only when appearing in specific contexts such as advertisements about fashion, music, beauty and so forth, the free-form phrases become those that always appear, acquiring a fixed and popular nature.

Remarks

Through the word and phrase insertion cases described above, we have found that:

- Case 1: inserting words reflecting a new thing or phenomenon, when they are missing or it is difficult to equivilate a satisfactory expression in Vietnamese, it is appropriate to use the language in the form of code-mixing.

- In case of inserting words and phrases with Vietnamese equivalent (case 2), the following reactions can be created:

+ Code-mixing creates convenience in expression and is the up-to-date trend in using the language of young people. At present, English is a foreign language taught in schools as well as a common, popular and essential foreign language of Vietnamese young people in work and modern life. Therefore, when using words and phrases in the form of code-mixing, especially in their own social groups, young people feel that communication becomes easier and cooler.

+ From another perspective, using too many English words or phrases in Vietnamese will create uncomfortable "psycholinguistics" in receivers. Receivers may not fully understand the meaning of the words or phrases used in code-mixing or they are uncomfortable with other intended purposes of the speaker (bragging and showing off foreign language proficiency). On the other hand, when "abusing" the form of code-mixing, Vietnamese people's speech becomes "mixed" and "polluted", the ability to use Vietnamese by the speakers to communicate is reduced and limited. What then are the reasons that lead to this negative code-mixing phenomenon? In our opinion, this stems from the following reasons:

- Habit of using language: today's young people have relatively proficient bilingualism, so code-mixing is just a natural way of communicating.
- To express themselves: many young people insert English words into Vietnamese sentences so as to brag about a foreign language proficiency.
- To express verbal content clearly and satisfactorily: many concepts reflecting things and phenomena of modern society originate from English, Vietnamese has no equivalent translations or interpretation; or the translation is equivalent but unsatisfactory; therefore, the young generation uses code-mixing so that their speech partners can obtain information at ease.
- In order to be suitable with one's group and generation: the use of code-mixing is sometimes caused by individuals under pressure from social groups. It is like a kind of "apparel" without which it is difficult for outsiders to identify. At the same time, individuals are also under an invisible pressure of the era of internationalisation and interconnection in today's fields.
- To improve English: learning foreign languages and improving foreign languages can also cause young people to use code-mixing.

Preserving the purity of the Vietnamese language

The main idea of preserving the purity of the Vietnamese language was explained by the late Prime Minister Pham Van Dong as follows:

"Talking about the purity of Vietnamese means" seeing its quality, value, identity, quintessence, recognizing its two features: rich and beautiful, and seeing its development potential" (Pham Van Dong, 1966, p75). Thus, the task of preserving the purity of Vietnamese is both to protect the identity and quintessence of Vietnamese and to promote that identity and quintessence in Vietnam's linguistic contexts in particular, and to the world in general.

For the above-mentioned code-mixing phenomenon, we realise that this is a phenomenon – the product of linguistic-cultural contact in today's youth. Therefore, we need to calmly acknowledge and evaluate this phenomenon objectively and comprehensively to aim at preserving and developing Vietnamese. Our opinion is expressed as follows:

- In the communication contexts of modern society, especially in young people, code-mixing is an inevitable linguistic - cultural phenomenon. As such, we cannot remove this phenomenon out of the speech and conversations of young people.
- Accept code-mixing when Vietnamese does not have words to interpret concepts.
- Abuse of code-mixing is not accepted (using too many English words and phrases while Vietnamese still has equivalent words).
- Base evaluations of appropriateness of code-mixing on social context and the communication topic, as well as specific communication purposes.
- Between the national language and foreign languages, always give priority to using the national language to preserve national identity. In this way, the language capacity of young people will be improved. Besides this, the form of code-mixing in communication can be used to integrate ourselves in the current context. However, the young generation should not and cannot use foreign words excessively.
- It is necessary to soon promulgate a policy on language, especially the language of young people in modern society. Specifically, on the basis of proposing policies and from those policies, implementation measures be established, whereby young people will have specific orientations in using language towards the preservation and development of the national language in the context of globalisation. At the same time, these linguistic policies will create the legal corridors necessary to regulate language development.



CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of code-mixing, with the popular form of inserting English words and phrases into Vietnamese texts in a number of online newspapers for young people, is a common phenomenon and has a profound coverage in modern social life. In order to preserve, develop and modernise Vietnamese, we need to pay attention to this phenomenon to orient its use towards solving the relationship between the national language (Vietnamese) and international language (English).

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