



Linguistic creativity in the language production of bilinguals

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My paper deals with linguistic creativity in Czech-German bilinguals. The aim is to determine a typology of deviations in the language production of bilinguals compared to the homeland variety. I will show that these deviations often reflect the linguistic creativity of the speakers.

The analysis is based on narrative texts collected within the project “Language across generations: contact induced change in morphosyntax in German-Slavic bilingual speech” supported by the German Research Foundation (Kosciolek 2019). The corpus consists of narrative interviews conducted in German and Czech (Nekvapil 2003). The focus lies on phrasal structures and syntactic (verbal) patterns.

The investigation of linguistic creativity in these patterns draws on a corpus study on heritage speakers of Russian in the USA by Rakhilina et al. (2016). The notion of creativity as “speakers’ ability to create novel expressions” (ibid: 2) is based on Chomsky (2009 [1966]). In this sense, linguistic creativity is also being studied in the context of language contact (Matras 2009).

This study concentrates on two annotation types used to indicate deviations from the baseline of comparison, i. e. the homeland variety. Firstly, pattern replications (PAT) are such cases of contact-induced replications where, in contrast to material borrowing, “only the patterns from one language are replicated” (Sakel 2007: 15) – see (1).

(1) a. **bilingual speech**

a ve škole si to všimli
and in school.LOC REFL DEM.ACC notice.3SG.PTCP
(MS_GAU_MI_CZ_0016, 00:05:29)

b. **homeland variety**

a ve škole si toho všimli
and in school.LOC REFL DEM.GEN notice.3SG.PTCP
and they noticed it at school

Secondly, ‘other deviations’ (*andere Abweichungen*, AA) stand for deviations which cannot be explained by the reference to a concrete pattern from the other language, as in (2). For this group of deviations, explanations related to the cognitive processes during speech production are possible.

(2) a. **bilingual speech**

tak jsme @ udělali .. kříž
so AUX make.1PL.PTCP cross.ACC
(BH_BUB_SP_CZ_0002, 00:03:41)

b. **homeland variety**

tak jsme se pokřižovali
so AUX REFL cross.1PL.PTCP
so we crossed ourselves



These deviations can be understood as a strategy of how the bilinguals deal with the progressive linguistic attrition of their secondary language.

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