"KANAKISCH": SOCIAL NATURE OF THE CONTACT LANGUAGE

I.N. Kostina, PhD, Senior lecturer
Zabaikalsky State University, Russia

This paper is an attempt to consider the linguistic phenomenon "Kanakisch" - one of the means of communication of the Turkish Diaspora in Germany. The author investigates social conditions of the formation, as well as the peculiarities of this social-group dialect (sociolect).

Keywords: contact language, "Kanakisch", Turkish Diaspora in Germany, social-group dialect (sociolect), communication.

The expansion of contacts between people of different ethnic and social communities, as well as the development and strengthening of international relations, characterize the era of globalization today. Language learning, the formation of which is the result of intensive contact, is significant in the context of intercultural interaction. This contact assumes the interaction of two or more groups that do not know each other's language, the presence of the standard situation, and the frequency of the communicative situation.

Based on these factors, we will take an effort to consider the characteristics of the linguistic phenomenon «Kanakisch», which is one of the means of communication in modern Germany. Before considering the nature of the contact language, we turn to the assumptions of this linguistic phenomenon. It is necessary to note that the formation of the language in question is within the Turkish ethnic group, one of the largest in Germany.

The impulse for the formation of the Turkish Diaspora was the economic processes occurring in Germany during the second half of the XX century [8]. This period in Germany was characterized by the activation of the processes of intercultural interaction in connection with the massive labor emigration from the countries in the Balkans, the Middle East, and after the collapse of the Socialist system – from Eastern Europe. High economic dynamics created a large demand for labor, which could not be satisfied only with its own resources. The shortage of workers in low-wage, dangerous, 'socially unpopular" employment areas, was compensated by attracting external resources. These employment areas were agriculture, construction, mining and municipal services. The opened niches in these areas have been filled by immigrants. Thus, the important role in the rapid development of the economy of the West was played by the cheap labor of millions of immigrants, subsequently called "guest workers" (workers on the invitation) [7].

Among foreign workers who came to Germany on hiring, the vast majority were from Turkey, the country strongly connected with the economic conditions of the West. [5]. For Turkey, being in a state of economic crisis due to devaluation of the lira and reduction of the foreign investment inflow, the agreement between the governments of these two countries was of great importance.

Today the Turkish ethnic group consists of more than two million people. In some federal lands, the percentage of ethnic Turks out of the total number of foreigners, ranges from 10% (Rhineland-Palatinate) to 40% (Bremen) [9]. In this connection, the language problem is especially important, because the language of interethnic communication is an important factor of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation, as well as the main instrument of transformation of Diaspora mentality. As Z.I. Levin observes, adaptation acts as "permanent "building bridges" through the gulf, which divides migrant and indigenous convergence and mentality characteristics of both in the extent which is necessary and acceptable for them, and through the preservation of the cultural distance between them" [3, 108].

One of the conditions for the adaptation of Turkish migrants was the need to learn the language of the dominant culture. The attempts to learn the language of the communication partner (in this case it is German) have not always been successful for Turks in Germany, because these two languages are not closely related. The compromise for Turkish nationals who were born in the Diaspora or who were brought to Germany in their childhood became «Kanakisch» – the contact language, forming on the border of cultural fields.

The etymology of the word "Kanake" is of great interest. At the end of the XIXth century German sailors used this word as a way to call residents of the Polynesian Islands and Oceania. As they had a reputation of being capable and loyal companions, this concept was used as a positive assessment. Gradually, connotative coloration of the concept has undergone a change. At the beginning of the XXth century, the word "Kanake" in Berlin slang was used as a synonym for «Hanake», which served as a symbol for a cruel, tactless person. In the 1960's and 70's of the XXth century the word "Kanake" became the negative emotional colored symbol for people from southern countries. This word was often used in relation to migrants; among them were Turks, Italians, Spaniards and Greeks.

The linguistic phenomenon called "Kanak Shprak" or "Kanakisch" was formed from the word «Kanake», which is a mixture of Turkish and German languages. The term «Kanakisch» gained its prominence in 1995 after the publishing of the novel "Kanak Sprak" by German-Turkish writer Feridun Zaimoglu [14].

It is difficult to determine the language status of this phenomenon. However, it is obvious that Kanakisch has several features that make this language a sociolect (social group dialect). A sociolect, as stressed by T.I. Erofeeva, "is included in the concept of a social type, which appears in a person under the influence of features which are peculiar to the race, ethnicity, nationality and social class. In other words, it is the speech of an "average individual". "On the other hand, sociolect includes a system of speech methods of a certain group, which is determined by several factors, being not only social, but also biological and psychological (e.g. gender, age, temperament)" [1, 52].

As it was noted above, one of the most important factors in the formation of the language "Kanakisch" was the necessity of communication between the Turkish Diaspora and the host society.

During the contact, when language is gradually formed, on the one hand, people use the means of literary German and broken German, and on the other hand, there are diverse exotic words, e.g. Turkish tokens.

The linguistic picture of the world finds its reflection in sociolect. The forming process of the linguistic picture of the world is complex and multifaceted, because the intercultural contact is a clash of two pictures of the world: migrant's linguistic picture of the world and the picture of the host society. According to the figurative remark of O.A. Leontovich, language is the lens, through which reality is refracted; due to this fact the linguistic picture of the world is formed [4].

In the works of many Turkish-authors writing in German, one can find examples of "Kanakisch". Some writers introduce examples into literary text which show the special symbiotic, eclectic, and multiple nature of the language. An illustration of a fancy German-Turkish blend is the creation of amusing neologisms, inter-linguistic puns, and mosaic patterns of German and Turkish words. We should note that this technique is typical for writers whose creativity is formed on the boundary of the cultural worlds and is a demonstration of cultural plurality [2].

- Sen krankami citkin?

- Hayir Doctor Krankschreiben yapmadi, Gesundschreiben yapti.

- Sen oglani Berufsschule ye mi yolluyorsum?

- Yok, Arbeitsamt a gidip geliyor.

- Urlaub a gidiyor musun?

- Kindergeld alirsak Schule ler kapaninca [13; 149].*

Participants of the dialogue clearly lack the means of the Turkish language for adequate communication, as the Turkish language is unable to express all the realities and concepts of the receiving environment. At the same time, German can not be a full-fledged means of expression, as it is not the native language. In this situation, the language of communication between the communicants can be "Kanakisch".

The assimilation of German lexicon leads to the fact that the communicants use foreign words to meet the existing vision of reality. We agree with S.G Ter-Minasova, she supposes that "when a person got to know a foreign word, he derives a piece of the puzzle from another unknown picture of the world, and he tries to combine it with the existing pictures in his mind, given by his own language" [6, 148].

Authors of Turkish origin focus on the problems faced by the countrymen in the study of German. As a result there is a "Turkish-German mix", in which the communicants avoid the complex rules of German grammar. According to I. Ataghan, the communication between Turk-migrants and representatives of German society seems like an overcoming of the suspension bridge between two sides: "stumbled under the weight of fear, with effort and desire at the same time, trying to get to the other side, and the bridge is constantly swinging, and if the force driving you forward, weakens, there is a little time to fall ..." [11, 220]. With fear and doubt, the hero finds necessary words among the others to be understood in the German society. "There are millions of words and there is not one among them that would serve as a bridge for understanding" [11, 221]. Arguing about the grammatical structure of German, I. Ataghan finds it difficult and counter-intuitive, because it is not easy for a Turk to see why the words "child", "girl", "lady" "in German are of neuter gender [10, 219]. Articles are something strange and incomprehensible to the Turkish migrants [11, 172]. We should note that the articles in the German fix the noun belonging to a particular grammatical gender.

It is significant that the Turkish language is becoming, not just alien but foreign, for immigrant children born in Germany. They hear a bird chirping in their parents' speech (in pronunciation, intonation etc.) that has nothing to do with the people's language. An example of this is the Turkish language perception by the main character of the story by Omer Polat "Gibberish" (Vogelsprache). The little boy, who was born in Germany and being German speaking, hears an eagle scream in his father's strange, incomprehensible speech accompanied with gestures, and his mother's smooth voice is like cooing doves. The child even sees his parents as half-people, who at night turn into a bird and fly away to their home in Turkey, and in the morning return to Germany [10].

At present "Kanakisch" is wide spread among the youth of Germany. This is due to the fact that language for young people, regardless of their ethnicity, is a means of self-affirmation in society. Turkish migrants' children don't receive a holistic cultural layer, but only elements from their parent's culture. In the words of E. Barin, " they speak German, but not even German. They do not have one language. It is a German with a strong Bavarian and Turkish accent at the same time" [12, 152]. German youth actively uses "Kanakisch" in everyday colloquial speech, seeking to create their own world. They express their protest to the adults' world, because adults do not want to understand their children.

For Turkish and German youth "Kanakisch" acts as the language of informal communication. "Kanakisch" is distributed not in all of Germany but only in areas where there are large groups of migrants. Being a mixture of natural language, non-normative expressions and tokens from the German and Turkish, "Kanakisch" serves the communicative needs of limited social groups. In this case, this group is made up mostly of representatives of the Turkish Diaspora, for whom "Kanakisch" is one of the means of communication in the foreign cultural space.

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* - Are you sick?
- No, doctor didn't give me a sick-leave. He says – you are healthy.
- Is your son at college?
- No. He often goes to the unemployment office.
- Are you going for vacation?
- If we get the child allowance.

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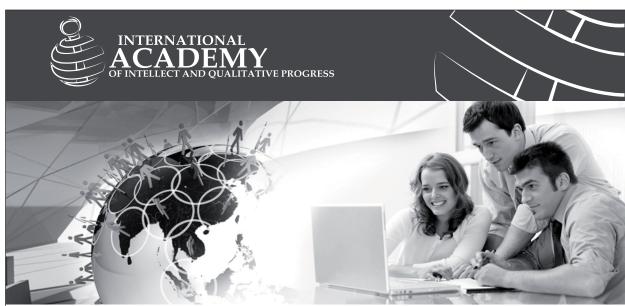
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Information about author:

Irina Kostina - PhD, Senior lecturer, Zabaikalsky State University; address: Russia, Chita; e-mail: valiir@mail.ru