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Multilingual Wordplays amongst Facebook Users in Mongolia

Abstract: This study focuses on instances of wordplay in terms of multilingual hybrid forms which are coined by Facebook users in Mongolia. The data show that English and other additional languages such as Russian are creatively and playfully mixed with the Mongolian phonetic, lexical, and syntactic systems. Using multilingual resources, the Facebook users create a new type of multilingual wordplay by which they reference locally relevant meanings and accommodate their own linguistic practices. Such forms of multilingual wordplay indicate the expansion of Mongolian to new linguistic domains, and they have started to extend to offline contexts.

Keywords: Facebook, hybrids, Mongolian, multilingual resources

1 Introduction

This chapter will look at the production of hybrid forms as a type of multilingual wordplay in a context that has been rarely addressed in previous research – the discourse of Facebook (FB) users in Mongolia. Whilst illustrating a number of examples from FB, the chapter will also illustrate how these forms of wordplay are often linked to complex offline contexts. It is assumed here that such instances of multilingual wordplay do not only enrich the linguistic repertoires of their users, but also entail the productions of similar patterns which are filled with meanings appropriate to the local contexts addressed. As opposed to a traditional understanding of "wordplay", according to which it often intends to produce humorous and amusing effects (Korhonen 2008), this chapter emphasises the fact that multilingual wordplays may also have no direct humorous or ludic function. Rather, "multilingual wordplay" can also be used in a wider sense where young speakers find such multilingual word creations as amusing, fun, youthful and playful linguistic actions (Godin 2006; Dovchin 2015). They readily and creatively combine elements from their multilingual repertoires in hybrid formations. In other words, young people who cross the boundaries of multiple languages are often involved in playful use and manipulations of their repertoires, despite the fact that some of their multilingual wordplay creations have no immediate humorous relation.

This research topic is timely in the situation of contemporary Mongolia, as new types of wordplay have been widely spreading in the sociolinguistic scene since 1990 when Mongolia embraced a peaceful transition from socialism to democracy, followed by the transformation from a centrally planned to a free market economic system (Marsh 2009, 2010). Before 1990, Mongolia had been a satellite nation of the Soviet Union with a communist political regime, isolating itself from the rest of the world. Clearly, Western cultures and languages were essentially avoided in the country, and the Russian language and culture were the only foreign elements available in Mongolia (Dovchin 2015).

Following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 80's, Mongolia's new democratic society liberated its socio-economic, political, cultural and linguistic traits in all its eccentric dimensions. Because of an incipient open-door policy towards economic, cultural and linguistic diversity, Mongolians started to enjoy direct access to the new media and technologies, e.g. the Internet, cable TV and FM radio stations, etc. (Dovchin 2016a, 2016b). As a result, Western languages such as English, German, French and Spanish as well as Eastern languages such as Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Turkish have started spreading quickly around the country (Dovchin 2011). This way, the once dominant Russian language has been replaced by the popular English tongue and other languages. However, Russian is still a widely studied foreign language in contemporary Mongolia – not only because it has been socio-historically present in the country for a long time, but also because it is the language of the immediate neighbouring country (Billé 2010).

While a great deal of concern has been expressed about the institutional role of some of these foreign languages in contemporary Mongolia since 1990 (Cohen 2004, 2005; Beery 2001), there has been less attention to the informal functions of these languages. That is, the role and status of these languages in everyday linguistic practices of Mongolians have not yet been adequately addressed by sociolinguists. However, it is clear that linguistic features associated with these languages are nowadays intensely mixed with the Mongolian language, creating a bewildering number of multilingual forms of wordplay. Despite their increasing frequency, these elements are typically treated as "unimportant language" (Blommaert and Varis 2015) by the majority of language educators in Mongolia. Yet, Blommaert and Varis (2015: 5–6) urge us to reconsider this attribution, as "[...] people often produce 'unimportant' language, when seen from the viewpoint of denotational and informational content, but still attach tremendous importance to such unimportant forms of communication." The authors further remind us of the important question of "how many of our vital social relationships are built on seemingly unimportant interactions", and

of how "restricted displays of information, knowledge and wit secure the persistence of big social structures, membership of which we find extraordinarily important" (Blommaert and Varis 2015: 6).

This chapter accounts for the meaning of such 'mundane' forms of wordplay and reflects on their use against the background of the linguistic conditions in post-socialist Mongolia whose speakers often integrate varied linguistic resources into their local language and culture. As already pointed out, this chapter will specifically look at the language practices of FB users in Mongolia, which reflect these new sociolinguistic conditions. In spite of the fairly small population of Mongolia (about 3 million), the report of Internet World Statistics (http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm#mn) shows that there are more than one million Internet users. More specifically, social media such as FB has soared in popularity, with more than half a million FB users in Mongolia (Dovchin 2015). Due to its widespread popularity, FB has become one of the most favourable spaces in identifying multilingual wordplay. This is due to the embedding of ample linguistic diversity and semiotic heterogeneity into the textual space of FB, including the use of multiple linguistic resources, repertoires, modes, codes, genres and styles (Sharma 2012; de Bres 2015). This chapter thus addresses two main questions:

1. How is multilingual wordplay linguistically created in the sociolinguistic practices of Mongolian FB users?
2. To what extent and how are these creations used in the broader Mongolian society, i.e. beyond FB?

2 Conceptual Framework: Multilingual Wordplay and Youth Language

This chapter will introduce the notion of multilingual wordplay, focusing on hybrid forms, which are present in the daily language practices of many (urban) speakers around the globe, especially in the younger generations. However, it is important to note that the term "multilingual wordplay" is used in a wider sense in this study, meaning that young speakers want to "have fun" or "be creative" when they incorporate varied multilingual resources within their own linguistic practices and create their own hybrid forms (Godin 2006). They playfully recombine linguistic elements from their multilingual repertoires and find these hybrid linguistic forms amusing, creative and potentially funny (Dovchin 2015).

Sociolinguists have documented this phenomenon under labels such as "youth macaronic languages" or "youth mixed languages." For example, in "straattaal" 'street language', a type of multilingual wordplay used by young people in the Netherlands, the speakers "borrow words or expressions from various languages that are spoken in the multilingual speech community in which they live" (Schoonen and Appel 2005: 88). The phrase "Woelah, die patas zijn flex, man!" ('I swear it, those shoes are terrific, man!') is indicative of this group style. In this expression an Arabic expression *woelah!* 'I swear by Allah' is mixed with the Sranan word *patas* 'sports shoes' and *flex*, a slang modification of the Dutch word *flexibel* 'flexible', integrated into Dutch morpho-syntax.

Doran (2004: 94–98) illustrates a linguistic variety called Verlan, which refers to "various alterations of Standard French terms, borrowings from such languages as Arabic, English, and Romani, and certain distinctive prosodic and discourse-level features" (2004: 98). Verlan is specifically popular across the multiethnic youth populations living in suburban Paris. It is an alternative language code and sociolect available to marginalized young people, which stands "both literally and figuratively outside the hegemonic norms of Parisian culture and language." Amongst other things, it is characterized by the inclusion of "calques" – "direct translation[s] of idiomatic expressions from other languages" (Doran 2004: 98), e.g. from Arabic – *Sur le Koran* 'I swear on the Koran'; *sur la tête de ma mère* 'I swear on my mother's head' etc. Verlan has also many forms of wordplay that invert the syllables in a word, producing a kind of secret language, inexplicable to outsiders: e.g., *méchant* 'mean' ⇒ *chanmé*; *fatigué* 'tired'⇒ *guétifa*; *branché* 'plugged in / cool' ⇒ *chébran*.

Furthermore, Leppänen et al. (2009: 1099) show examples of hybrid forms of bilingual wordplay in the Finnish context, where online users integrate varied forms of nouns and verbs derived from the jargon of English extreme sports into the grammatical framework of Finnish. For example, words such as *RISPEKTIT* 'RESPECTS' and *reilil* 'on the rail' have been written according to "the phonological spellings of the English words but using the Finnish orthographical and morphological rules (such as substituting *k* for *c*, adding the word-final *i*, the plural marker *-t* or a case ending)" (Leppänen et al. 2009: 1099). Some words are also partially integrated into Finnish, as for instance, the Finnish word *bonelessit* 'bonelesses' follows its "English spelling but has Finnish suffixes attached to it", i.e., "the word-final *i* and the plural marker *-t*" (Leppänen et al. 2009: 1099).

Sultana (2014) notes that some English inflections, such as the present continuous marker *-ing* or the plural suffix *-s* are mixed with Bangla root words,

creating new words. Young Bangla speakers add the English plural suffix *-s* to a Bangla word such as *bondos* 'friends'.

Additionally, Belz and Reinhardt (2004) show how a group of German students moves beyond the conventions of English and German, creating their own language: "*Engleutsch*", a combination of English and Deutsch 'German'.

Likewise, the recombination of Mongolian semiotic features with English is one of the most common language practices among the urban youth culture of Mongolia (Dovchin 2011, 2015, 2016a, 2016b). The forms *chatlah* 'to chat online' or *plandah* 'to plan', for example, combine the English core words *chat* and *plan* and the Mongolian suffixes *-lah* 'to' and *-dah* 'to', creating the unconventional hybrid expressions such as *chatlah* and *plandah*, which cross the boundaries of English and Mongolian (Dovchin et al. 2015, 2016; Sultana et al. 2013, 2015).

These hybrid terms are better understood as one of those common local linguistic jargons used by young Mongolians, since they are used both in online and offline linguistic contexts in contemporary Mongolia. Not only English but also other linguistic resources may be mixed with the Mongolian language to create new multilingual hybrid forms of expressions. For example, with the arrival of Japanese sumo in Mongolia in 1991, many Japanese sumo-driven words have been invented in Mongolia (following the norm to insert Mongolian features into non-Mongolian terms). *Tsuparidah* is one of those expressions, followed by the wide popularity of Japanese sumo in Mongolia. Relocalizing a Japanese stem, the word *tsupari*, a popular Japanese Sumo wrestling move where an open hand strike is directed at the face or the trachea, is combined with the Mongolian suffix *-dah* 'to do something'. This results in a local expression, *tsuparidah* 'to do tsupari trick' (see also Dovchin et al. 2015: 15; Dovchin 2016a).

Overall, examples of such hybrid forms of multilingual wordplays abound around the world if we think of "Perker Sprog" and "Integrated Language" in Copenhagen (Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen, and Møller 2011); "Rinkeby Swedish" (Godin 2006: 134), which illustrates the trait of linguistic irregularities such as reversed word orders or "Illegaal spreken" in Belgium (Jaspers 2011). In such contexts we can see new local language mixtures brought about by the practice of multilingual wordplay.

From this perspective, the main argument is that the speakers borrow words and expressions from various available linguistic resources and relocalize them within their own contextual circumstances (Higgins 2009; Pennycook, 2010). As Dovchin, Sultana and Pennycook (2015: 8) acknowledge, "...['youth'] speakers are understood not only through how they borrow, repeat and mimic certain linguistic resources available to them, but also through how they make new linguistic meanings within this complex relocalizing process. The processes of

blending, borrowing and bending of available linguistic resources [...] are further relocalized to make new linguistic meanings [...].” Here, as Ag and Jørgensen (2012: 528) emphasize, “the use of features from several ‘different languages’ in the same production may be frequent and normal, especially in in-group interaction, even when the speakers apparently know very little material associated with several of the involved ‘languages’.” The present chapter will seek to illustrate how multilingual wordplay, based on a crossing of the boundaries of different languages, creates variable new hybrid forms of language practices and new meanings that are sociolinguistically valid and realized in varied local contexts.

3 Research Methodology

The data examples used in this chapter derive from a larger longitudinal “netnographic study” (Kozinets 1998, 2002; Logan 2015) and an Internet ethnographic analytic framework (Androutsopoulos 2006). Altogether, these constitute an ethnographic qualitative research methodology, which specifically looks at the behaviors of online users in a natural and unobtrusive manner. Through netnography, I looked into the linguistic practices of young Mongolians on FB, starting from July 2011 until December 2015.

The research project recruited young adults based in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, who volunteered to participate in the study. The majority of participants were students at the National University of Mongolia (NUM) and their extended friends aged between 17 and 28. Overall, 50 young adults participated in the research. As soon as the potential participants were identified, they were added to my own FB account. This access gave me an opportunity to observe the participants’ language practices using “netnography.” One of the most important methods incorporated within netnography is “prolonged engagement”, “persistent observation” and “vigilance” when the researcher is online (Kozinets 1998: 369–370). Through netnography, I was able to learn about the speakers’ online linguistic activities and literacy practices.

During netnography, I also conducted participant observations and casual group discussions and hangouts with my research participants in order to better understand their linguistic world. Many of my research participants have provided me with metalinguistic explanations of why certain examples or usages of wordplay have been used in certain online / offline contexts, their sociolinguistic implications, histories and backgrounds.

For the purpose of the present chapter, I will discuss seven out of the hundreds of pages of examples which were retrieved from the FB pages of my research participants by using the netnographic approach described above. Note, however, that these examples cannot fully represent the seamless space of online wordplay, as only a limited number of people participated in the research.

The profile names in the extracts are all pseudonyms to protect anonymity. FB profile pictures were also removed to protect the participants' identities. The examples presented here have been copied and pasted into an MS word document and embedded in the table accompanied with English translations. All Mongolian texts used in the examples are translated from Mongolian into English by the researcher. Language guidance is provided in each extract of examples.

4 Forms of Multilingual Wordplay by Mongolian Facebook Users

This section will analyze the forms of multilingual wordplay in FB texts authored by the research participants. The examples are divided into three main subsections based on the linguistic resources assimilated in the local language Mongolian: 1) Creating multilingual wordplay through English names, 2) Creating multilingual wordplay through FB linguistic features, and 3) Creating multilingual wordplay through Russian linguistic resources. For Mongolian elements regular font is used in the examples, whereas English units are italicized and Russian elements appear in bold print.

4.1 Creating Multilingual Wordplay through English Names

One of the main and most common functions of wordplay is to amuse the listeners or readers and to produce benevolent humorous effects (Delabastita 1996; Niagolov 2013). Since the democratic revolution in Mongolia in 1990, it has been a common linguistic practice for young Mongolians to play with names from different languages for humorous and leisurely purposes, i.e. to tease, make fun or mock each other. Structurally, the examples of wordplays presented in this subsection are mainly created by incorporating English names into the Mongolian language, producing a hybrid form of expression for use in the local context.

(1) Saruul Molor: Bayaraa namaig *Obama*dchihsan bna
'Bayaraa has "Obamified" me'
31 August 2015

Example (1) is retrieved from one of my research participants, Amina Batsaikhan's FB photo album. It contains a specific photo, which shows five people standing next to each other with smiling faces. However, one person's face in the photograph, standing at the far right, is blocked by the hand of a man standing next to him because the latter is waving his hand. Saruul Molor, whose face was blocked by his friend's hand, leaves a comment, stating *Bayaraa namaig Obamadchihsan bna* 'Bayaraa has "Obamified" me'. Note that the commentator is using the transliterated Roman Cyrillic writing system here instead of the Mongolian Cyrillic alphabet, a common orthographic practice amongst Mongolian online users (Dovchin 2015). Here, the hybrid wordplay *Obamadchihsan* is used to refer to the meaning of having one's face blocked or covered by another person's hand on the photograph. It is a combination of the English name *Obama* and the Mongolian suffix *-dchihsan* 'getting -ified / -ification', creating the new playful Mongolian word *Obamadchihsan* 'getting Obamified; Obamification'.

The sociolinguistic history of this wordplay is beyond FB and relates to a particular photograph, involving the President of the USA, Barack Obama and the President of Mongolia, Elbegdorj Tsakhia during a photo-op with world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly in New York (the photo can be found here: http://www.news.mn/r/81010). Just as the photograph was about to be taken, President Obama raised his hand to wave for some reason. Thus, the photo captured a smiling Obama with his waving hand completely covering the face of the President of Mongolia who was standing right next to him.

The photograph gained lots of popularity amongst the population in Mongolia, as many people started making jokes and mocking the picture. As a result, the hybrid wordplay *Obamadchihsan* 'getting Obamified' is very popular in Mongolia nowadays, accompanying humorous and amusing effects amongst its users. Both online and offline speakers often use this phrase to tease or make jokes about funny-looking photos. Even the President of Mongolia himself made a parody of this incidence, as he created a caricature of this photo in his latest "Happy New Year" video greeting for his citizens. In this video, the face of the President is covered by one of the actors involved during the photo shoot (see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKAg3j1MTUE). At some point, people start to deliberately produce similar types of photos, "Obamifying" each other's face, and giving funny and humorous captions such as *Obamadachihsan zurag* 'The

photo of Obamification' (see photo here: http://www.news.mn/r/81010). The Mongolian President's son also released a photograph to create a humorous parody with the aim "to take revenge on Obama for his father", in which he "Obamifies" Barack Obama's wax figure face, standing in the museum of Madame Tussauds.

However, this replicated type of multilingual wordplay also needs to be taken seriously, since creations like this have broader sociolinguistic and sociohistoric backgrounds and implications. Offline contexts offer many other examples similar to the multilingual construction of *Obadamadchihsan*: For example, Sultana et al. (2013: 702–703) mention the forms *morinkhuurification* and *huumiification*. They combine the core Mongolian words *morin khuur* 'horse headed fiddle' and *huumii* 'throat singing' and the English suffix *-ification*, referring to the practice of using traditional musical instruments and styles with a blend of Mongolian and English. These terms "come to represent the cultural practice of playing something globally popular through local musical instruments." Speakers seem to "value 'morin khuur' and 'huumii' in a way that avoids their common English translations ('horse headed fiddle' and 'throat singing') while still using English suffixes to relocate these terms discursively." (Sultana et al. 2013: 702–703).

4.2 Creating Multilingual Wordplays through Facebook Linguistic Features

Since the Internet has become very popular in Mongolia, it is now also a common online and offline linguistic practice for Mongolians to use hybrid forms which are based on a combination of online default linguistic features and Mongolian linguistic resources. Where there are no native terms for technology and the online-oriented terms / concepts they convey, the foreign default terms quickly take root and grow locally. These types of hybrid constructions are now widely used not only in the context of online but also in face-to-face contexts as part of daily communicative events. Two hybrid terms very popular amongst Mongolians, who use them for socializing and other communicative purposes are e.g., *messagedeerei* 'message me please', which is a combination of the English word *message* and the Mongolian phrase *-deerei* 'please' or *emaildeerei* 'email me please' – a combination of English *email* and the Mongolian phrase *-deerei* 'please' etc. (Dovchin 2011: 330).

In a similar vein, the examples below are created by a combination of FB default terminologies and Mongolian linguistic resources. Not only are these word-

plays widespread across FB but they are also practiced beyond FB when the speakers generally integrate them within their daily offline sociolinguistic repertories.

(2) Bulgan Hand: Sain naizuudiigaa *tag*laarai. Haraad bayarlag
'Please tag your friends as much as possible. They will be happy to see this'
1 July 2013

Example (2) has been retrieved from my research participant Bulgan's FB wall post. Bulgan shares a photo album of the party she organized the previous night and asks her friends who attended the party to tag their photos. She uses a transliterated Roman Mongolian orthography in this FB post in the same way as the FB user in example (1). A hybrid linguistic form, crossing the boundaries of Mongolian and English, *taglaarai* is used in this example. *Taglaarai* is a creation combining the English core word *tag* (to be more specific, FB default terminology – to tag one's photo) and the Mongolian phrase *-laarai* 'please do'.

(3) Shiileg Tseren: Эрхэм *Facebook*чүүд ээ! Шинэ оны мэнд ☺
'Dear Facebookers! Happy new year ☺'
1 January 2014

In example (3), one of my research participants, Shiileg, sends his New Year's greeting to his FB friends by updating his FB wall post with a "Happy New Year" message. For that, Shiileg predominantly uses the Cyrillic Mongolian orthography. Yet, the example of wordplay is also created by the affixation of the English core word *Facebook* and the Mongolian suffix *-чүүд ээ* '-er (plural s)', resulting in *Facebookчүүд ээ* 'Facebookers / Facebook users'. This example shows how hybrid expressions may also be created by the combination of different orthographic systems such as the Roman English and Cyrillic Mongolian in one form.

In example (4) below, FB user Ochiroo posts an image, which shows three different well-known singers in Mongolia and incorporates a question addressed to the Mongolian President, "Who is the best singer, Mr. President?" This question and the images are supposed to draw the attention of the President of Mongolia, as the President is the sole responsible authority in Mongolia who assigns the state awards for artists and singers. This image shows how the singers in the second (*Монгол Улсын Төрийн Соёрхолт – The Highest State Honored Artist of Mongolia*') and the third images ('*МУГЖ- The Distinguished Artist of Mongolia*') have already been honored with the highest state awards by the

President. Meanwhile, the singer in the first image was awarded an honored prize ('МУСТА – The Leading Artist of Culture of Mongolia'), which retains lower status than the other two singers. Nevertheless, for his many fans, the singer enjoys the reputation of being one of the best rock singers in Mongolia. Clearly, this FB user is not happy with the current hierarchy of awards as he wants the singer in the first image to be awarded the same prize as the other two singers. That is why Ochiroo posts this image with a question and message addressed to the President.

(4) Ochiroo Danzan: Заа эрхэм ЕРӨНХИЙЛӨГЧ-ийг хартал нь *ШЭЙР*лээрэй залуусааа …
'OK guys! Please do share [this picture] until the President sees it…'
10 February 2014

Post (4) includes another example of a hybrid formation *ШЭЙРлээрэй* 'Please do share' – an outcome of the addition of the Mongolian suffix *-лээрэй* 'please do' onto the FB term *share*. Note that English *share* has been transliterated and capitalized into the Cyrillic Mongolian orthographic system as *ШЭЙР* to acknowledge its foreign origin while combined with the Mongolian suffix *-лээрэй*. Once English *share* is capitalized and transliterated into the Cyrillic Mongolian and mixed with the Mongolian word, it becomes anglicized Mongolian that is no longer decipherable as English.

(5) Maral Tumur: Яаж лайк цуглуулах вэ
'How can I collect "likes"?'
21 May 2015

Example (5) has been retrieved from Maral's FB wall update, when she posts a selfie of herself and asks her FB friends to give her many *likes* on her selfie in a sarcastic and playful manner, *Яаж лайк цуглуулах вэ* 'How can I collect "likes"?', using the Cyrillic Mongolian writing system. The example of hybrid wordplay is *лайк цуглуулах* 'to collect likes', a combination of FB default term *like* and a Mongolian verb, *цуглуулах* 'to collect'. *Like* has been transliterated into the Cyrillic Mongolian from Roman English orthography and then paired with the Mongolian verb *цуглуулах*. Note that this creation seems to be different in terms of its construction from other types of hybrid expressions presented in the previous examples. The examples presented earlier were often created through integrating two linguistic features (e.g. suffixes) from two different languages to create one word. By contrast, *лайк цуглуулах* is the outcome of two core words from two different languages, producing a new meaning through the pairing of two separate words.

4.3 Creating Multilingual Wordplay through Russian Linguistic Resources

(6) Чу**ка** (Одоохондоо **Один**оороо) 'Chuka (Still Single)'

Example (6) represents one of my research participant's FB profile name. Instead of putting his real name, this FB user displays a pseudo FB profile name, *Чука (Одоохондоо Одиноороо)* 'Chuka (Still Single)'. In this short profile name, there are two examples of wordplay, crossing the boundaries of Russian and Mongolian languages. Firstly, he uses the Mongolian / Russian hybrid word *Чука* 'Chuka' for his FB profile page. *Чука* is an abbreviated version of long Mongolian names such as *Chuluun*, and when some people shorten their names, they occasionally use the Russian morpheme *-ka* replacing the Mongolian morpheme *-luun*, producing *Chuka*. This Russian suffix is often combined with other Mongolian vowels, i.e. *[k]a, [k]i,* and *[k]o* are used as the vowels in the suffix are consistent with the vowels in the core word (e.g., *Bat+ka = Batka* (male Mongolian nickname); *Nomin+ko = Nomiko* (female Mongolian nickname) (Dovchin et al. 2015: 12). The practice of using the Russian suffix *-ka* with Mongolian words is often perceived as a girlish, childish or affectionate way of speaking or referring to one another. This is perhaps related to the fact that the Russian suffix *-ka* is often added at the end of Russian female personal names as in *Masha+ka = Mashka* to show affection and fondness (for other examples see Dovchin et al. 2015: 12).

Secondly, this FB user displays another name in parentheses after his short name *Одоохондоо Одиноороо* '(Still Single)' as part of his FB profile name. Here, the wordplay *Одиноороо* 'single' is created by a combination of the Russian core word, *Один* 'singular' and the Mongolian postposition *-ороо* 'by'. The combination of these two words creates a new meaning in Mongolian, *Одиноороо* indicating the meaning of 'single'. *Одиноороо* is used here with *Одоохондоо* 'still', seeking to achieve a rhyming effect by repeating the syllable *Од-*.

The wordplay *Одиноороо* is widely used by Mongolians since it has been initially used by a popular comical show in Mongolia. Many people use this term when they reveal their "single" relationship status in a humorous and playful manner. When people are asked about their relationship status or when they are openly looking for a partner, they often use *Одиноороо*, signaling the message in a witty style that they are still single because nobody wants them. There is even a famous pop song called *Одиноороо* performed by pop artist Sukhee. It is about a single guy who is missing and reminiscing about his former lover.

(7) **Ganbaa Od**: энэ хамар нүд 2 яагаад ийм юманд өртөмхийн болоо?! дахиад л **тень**дүүлчлээ хахаха. гэм зэмгүй байжуугаад л... ☺

'Why are eyes and nose so sensitive? They have been "eyeshadowed" [referring to 'punched'] again hahaha. I was totally innocent...☺'

Like Comment Share

4 people like this.

11 April 2015 · Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia ·

Example (7) presents Ganbaa's FB wall updates. He was partying the previous night and apparently was involved in a brawl. As a result, he was punched on the eye and nose, and they look black-and-blue now. This unfortunate incident is revealed on Ganbaa's FB post in a humorous manner through his usage of the wordplay *теньдүүлчлээ* 'have been eyeshadowed', accompanied by the onomatopoeic expression of laughing *хахаха* and the smiling emoticon face ☺.

The hybrid compound *теньдүүлчлээ* is created by mixing the Russian root word *тени* 'shadow' and the Mongolian verb *-дүүлчлээ* 'have been', creating the new wordplay in Mongolian *теньдүүлчлээ* 'have been punched'. The Russian root word *тени* 'shadow' is often used in the Mongolian language as *тень* meaning *eyeshadow*. When Mongolian women talk about a cosmetic product that is applied on the eyelids and under the eyebrows such as eye shadow, they often use the Mongolianized Russian word *тень*. The literal meaning of

теньдуулчлээ in Ganbaa's context then refers to the idea that his eyes have been 'eyeshadowed', but the metaphorical meaning should be understood as 'black-blue eyes because of having been punched in the eyes'. Many Mongolians use this wordplay in a humorous manner to tease each other's injured face due to punching or some other fighting incidents.

5 Conclusion

Drawing on FB linguistic repertoires of Mongolian users, this chapter offers some understanding on the role of wordplays in the context of modern post-socialist Mongolia. It can be argued that the presence of multilingual wordplay in the FB space of Mongolia is clearly widespread (Dovchin 2016a, 2016b; Dovchin, Sultana, and Pennycook 2016). The chapter shows that Mongolian FB users have already allowed for the inclusion of multilingual hybrid forms to facilitate and expand their linguistic creativity. As the examples demonstrate, the users can play with elements from their multilingual repertoires, creating unconventional and potentially humorous hybrid forms. Some of these formations seem to be "epidemic" in that similar forms are produced and start spreading. This is in itself an instance of playfulness and creativity although some examples of hybrids might have no immediate ludic or humorous intentions.

When we visit the FB profiles of Mongolian users, multilingual resources are predominantly meshed and mixed with the Mongolian language. English and other additional languages are effortlessly mixed with the Cyrillic and transliterated Roman Mongolian scripts and the Mongolian phonetic, lexical, and syntactic systems.

While mixing the linguistic resources with two different meanings from two different languages such as "Russian and Mongolian" or "English and Mongolian", FB users create new terms and expressions referencing locally relevant meanings. The new meanings embedded within instances of word creation on FB are integrated into interactions amongst its users, sometimes evoking other sociolinguistic stylistic patterns, metaphors, plots and irony. In other words, rather than simply borrowing different multilingual resources for the Mongolian context, the Mongolian FB users relocalize those resources alongside Mongolian and create new meanings and new expressions in the local context. Mongolian FB users exploit the varied meanings attached to multiple languages to accommodate their own linguistic practices.

Overall, hybrid formations are not always restricted to online and FB environments. In many instances, multilingual word creations recur beyond FB

and their multiple meanings communicate with each other over larger stretches of social contexts. These multilingual lexical innovations not only carry humorous and amusing sociolinguistic implications, histories and connotations, but may often appear in social contexts for socializing purposes. They are widely used across the broader sociolinguistic scene of contemporary Mongolia. Consequently, the creation of hybrid terms and expressions expands the linguistic horizon of the new linguistic domains of the local language.

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