

## RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN TIK-TOK DISCOURSE: LANGUAGE ADAPTATION AND IDENTITY OF YOUTH COMMUNITIES

*Inamova Nargiza Odilovna*

*teacher, department of "Foreign languages", university of journalism and mass communications of Uzbekistan,*

*E-mail: [inomovanargiza@gmail.com](mailto:inomovanargiza@gmail.com)*

**Abstract:** This article explores how Russian-speaking youth use language on TikTok, focusing on linguistic adaptation, hybridization, and the construction of digital identities. Drawing on discourse analysis and digital ethnography, the study reveals how TikTok serves as a site of language innovation where youth navigate between standard Russian, slang, translanguaging, and internet memes. These practices reflect both the desire to belong to global digital cultures and the affirmation of local and linguistic identities. The research highlights the dynamic interplay between digital communication norms and sociolinguistic behavior in contemporary Russian-speaking communities.

**Keywords:** Tik-Tok, russian language, youth, digital discourse, identity, translanguaging, sociolinguistics, youth discourse, digital identity, language adaptation, social media, hybrid language, meme culture.

**Introduction.** The emergence of TikTok as a dominant platform among global youth communities has significantly reshaped linguistic practices and modes of identity expression. In Russian-speaking contexts, TikTok provides a unique lens through which to examine how young users adapt language to suit platform constraints, aesthetic trends, and subcultural affiliations. The platform's visual-aural affordances promote not just creativity but also linguistic experimentation that redefines conventional norms of Russian usage.

In recent years, TikTok has become one of the most influential platforms for youth expression worldwide. With its short-form video format, algorithm-driven content discovery, and creative affordances, TikTok enables users to rapidly circulate trends, humor, and commentary across linguistic and cultural boundaries. For Russian-speaking youth, TikTok functions not only as a space for entertainment but also as a dynamic arena for the negotiation of identity, belonging, and linguistic innovation.

Unlike earlier text-based platforms such as VKontakte or LiveJournal, TikTok places strong emphasis on sound, visual performance, and rapid editing. These multimodal features reshape the way language is used—often blending standard Russian with youth slang, internet-specific phrases, English borrowings, and regional dialects. As a result, TikTok discourse among Russian-speaking users demonstrates a high degree of language adaptation—a set of linguistic shifts influenced by platform norms, peer culture, and the broader globalization of media content.

At the same time, TikTok is a key site for identity construction, where language use reflects and performs aspects of youth identity including age, class, gender, urban or regional background, and subcultural affiliation. Through stylized performances, ironic language play, and creative linguistic forms, Russian-speaking users engage in complex practices of self-presentation that challenge traditional norms of language correctness and social behavior.

This article investigates how language adaptation on TikTok intersects with identity among Russian-speaking youth. It addresses the following questions:

1. What linguistic features characterize Russian TikTok discourse?
2. How do young users navigate between Russian and other languages (especially English)?
3. In what ways does linguistic practice on TikTok contribute to the formation of digital identities?

By examining these questions, the study aims to contribute to a growing body of research in digital sociolinguistics and media studies, shedding light on how contemporary youth shape and are shaped by the linguistic affordances of global digital platforms.

**Main part.** Tik-Tok's architecture significantly influences how language is used. Its short video format (initially 15–60 seconds, now up to 3 minutes) requires content to be concise, engaging, and often emotionally charged. Russian-speaking users adapt their language accordingly:

✓ **Lexical economy:** Speech is shortened, simplified, and often relies on high-frequency slang or emojis. Common expressions such as “kringe”, “жиза” (relatable), or “трэш” (trash/crazy) serve as efficient communicative tools.

✓ **Visual-linguistic multimodality:** Users mix spoken Russian with on-screen text (often stylized in Latin script or nonstandard spelling), sound overlays, and visual cues to enhance the meaning and emotional impact of the message.

✓ **Hashtag language:** Hashtags like #фипи, #студентка, #ржать, or #ЯЗЫКМОЛОДЁЖИ become part of the discourse, often functioning like taglines or summaries of cultural microtrends.

A hallmark of Russian TikTok speech is the integration of English and other linguistic influences:

✓ **Code-mixing:** Words like “cringe”, “random”, “vibe”, “low-key”, “cancel” are often inserted into Russian sentences, e.g., “Это был такой кринжовый момент, реально low-key обидно.”

✓ **Stylized english:** English is sometimes used not for semantic clarity, but for aesthetic, humorous, or identity-related effects. Mispronounced, intentionally awkward English becomes a source of comic or ironic distancing.

✓ **Regional variation:** Users from Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe incorporate localisms or dialectal forms, creating multilingual blends and hybrid linguistic styles.

This translanguaging reflects both a globalized youth identity and a resistance to linguistic purism. The ability to switch codes fluently signals social competence and alignment with cosmopolitan digital values.

Russian TikTok hosts numerous youth subcultures—goths, emos, “post-irony” creators, gamers, feminists, queer communities—all of which utilize specific linguistic styles:

✓ **Irony and metacommentary:** Satirical Russian, Soviet phraseology recontextualized for humor, or deadpan delivery are used to signal post-ironic or anti-mainstream attitudes.

✓ **Feminist and activist voices:** Feminist TikTokers often use assertive, consciously standard Russian when discussing serious issues, contrasting with the informal speech styles used in humorous videos. This deliberate code choice reinforces credibility and ideological alignment.

✓ **Class and regional markers:** Use of urban slang, Moscow dialect, or conversely, regional accents and provincial vocabulary functions as a marker of background and sometimes parody.

Humor is central to TikTok discourse. Russian-speaking users rely on:

✓ **Meme templates:** Language drawn from memes like “и чё теперь?”, “я в шоке”, or “теперь я видел всё” become reusable, remixed catchphrases.

✓ **Voice filters and audio reuse:** Certain audios—sometimes old Soviet songs, viral interviews, or dubbed scenes—circulate widely and are reinterpreted through exaggerated gestures or mismatched subtitles.

✓ **Self-parody:** Many users embrace linguistic “mistakes” or overly dramatic expressions as part of their digital persona, undermining expectations of correctness and emphasizing authenticity.

**Discussion.** The patterns observed in Russian TikTok discourse suggest that the platform fosters a distinct digital linguistic ecology. Youth are not simply consuming language; they are co-constructing it in real-time. Russian here becomes a living, flexible resource that can be stretched, mixed, and stylized to fit rapidly shifting online trends.

The balance between Russian and English, standard and nonstandard forms, serious and ironic tones, reveals how language is used to negotiate identity and social positioning. This has implications for both linguistics and cultural studies: TikTok reflects a post-normative model of language, where innovation, humor, and expressiveness often override traditional grammatical or lexical standards.

**Conclusion.** Russian TikTok discourse exemplifies how digital platforms foster new forms of language adaptation and identity expression among youth. The interplay of Russian, English, and internet slang in TikTok points to the emergence of a translocal youth culture grounded in digital literacy and sociolinguistic creativity.

The analysis of Russian-language discourse on TikTok reveals the emergence of a vibrant, adaptive, and identity-driven linguistic space shaped by the interplay of digital media norms and youth cultural practices. Russian-speaking TikTok users do not merely replicate standard linguistic forms; rather, they actively remix and reframe them through slang, hybridization, translanguaging, and multimodal expression. These practices reflect a broader trend of linguistic innovation catalyzed by social media environments, where the boundaries between formal and informal language, Russian and English, speech and performance are increasingly fluid.

Language adaptation on TikTok is not arbitrary—it is closely tied to identity construction. Young users draw on a range of linguistic resources to signal group membership, humor, irony, resistance, or authenticity. The use of nonstandard forms, meme-based references, and mixed-language codes often serves as a deliberate identity statement rather than a sign of linguistic degradation. In this context, TikTok becomes both a linguistic playground and a performative stage for negotiating cultural belonging.

The findings highlight how global platforms like TikTok contribute to the evolution of the Russian language and offer insight into the values, anxieties, and aspirations of post-digital youth. These transformations challenge traditional understandings of language purity, national identity, and generational norms, suggesting the need for updated frameworks in sociolinguistic research.

Ultimately, the discourse of Russian-speaking TikTok communities illustrates the complex, creative, and often contradictory ways in which young people engage with language in the digital age—reshaping not only how they speak, but who they are and how they are seen.

### References:

1. Androutsopoulos, J. (2014). Languageing when contexts collapse: Audience design in social media. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 4–5, 62–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2014.08.006>.
2. Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies*, 7(4–5), 585–614. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407>.
3. Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.
4. Tagg, C., Seargeant, P., & Lyons, A. (2017). *The Discourse of Social Media: Language and Identity on the Internet*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
5. Leppänen, S., Kytölä, S., Jousmäki, H., Peuronen, S., & Westinen, E. (2014). Entextualization and resemiotization as resources for identification in social media. In S. Leppänen & E. Westinen (Eds.), *Social Media Discourse, (Dis)identifications and Diversities* (pp. 112–145). Routledge.
6. Georgakopoulou, A. (2017). *Small Stories Research: Methods – Analysis – Outreach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
7. Eckert, P. (2000). *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice: The Linguistic Construction of Identity in Belten High*. Oxford: Blackwell.
8. Blommaert, J. (2010). *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
9. Varis, P., & Wang, X. (2011). The discursive construction of authenticity: The case of young hip-hop fans in China. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), 69–89.
10. Danet, B., & Herring, S. C. (Eds.). (2007). *The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.