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**THE «SECOND LANGUAGE EGO»: HOW LEARNING ENGLISH
RESHAPES IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY IN A MULTILINGUAL
CONTEXT***Zharylkassyn Arailym Kairatkyzy*

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This article examines the phenomenon of the English «Second Self» among university students in Kazakhstan. As English proficiency grows, many learners experience a shift in personality, feeling more confident and direct when switching languages. Through qualitative interviews, this work investigates the causes of this identity shift and its interaction with local cultural values. The findings reveal that English often functions as a «liberating tool,» allowing students to bypass traditional social filters and hierarchies present in their native languages. The article suggests that the English «Second Self» provides a psychological safe space for identity exploration, balancing global communication styles with traditional roots.

Keywords: Second Language Ego, Identity shift, Kazakhstan, Multilingualism, Social filtering.

Many people who speak several languages often notice something interesting: they feel like a completely different person when they switch from their native language to English. You might have heard friends say they feel more confident, funny, or even more direct when speaking English. This isn't just a coincidence—it's a real psychological phenomenon called the «Second Language Ego». I chose this topic because I've always been fascinated by how knowing a new language can actually change someone's personality and the way they see themselves. In Kazakhstan this phenomenon is particularly compelling to study due to our unique multilingual landscape. Our country has a mix of different cultures and languages, and for many of us, English is more than just a subject at school. It's a way to connect with the world, social media, and new ideas. In this article, I wanted to examine how our

personality changes when we speak English. Does it make us feel more free? Or does it sometimes clash with our local traditions? To explore this phenomenon, this research is guided by three primary questions:

1. How exactly do people in Kazakhstan change when they start speaking English?

2. What factors, such as social media and education, contribute to this development?

3. How does the local cultural context shape or conflict with this identity shift?

To understand the connection between language and self-perception, it is important to look at a few established theories. These three frameworks explain exactly why our personalities shift when we speak English. Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, suggests that a significant part of our identity stems from the social groups we belong to [5]. When students in Kazakhstan speak English, they are not just merely using a tool; they are joining a «global community». This sense of belonging allows them to adopt behaviors that are more open and confident, aligning with the international group they now identify with. Furthermore, the Sociocultural Theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky emphasizes that learning and development occur through social interaction [6]. We don't just memorize grammar; we absorb the cultural context. From my perspective, many students in Kazakhstan shape their «English Ego» by mirroring Western influencers and media. This leads to a real identity transformation because the social environment of the English language is very different from our native one. Finally, Identity Theory confirms that our «self» is not a fixed entity but is inherently flexible [3]. In this context, the «Second Language Ego» acts as a psychological bridge, enabling a person to act out a role that might be bolder or more expressive than their native personality, thus providing a temporary escape from traditional social constraints.

For this study, I conducted a qualitative interview with students in Kazakhstan who speak English as a second or third language. I asked them to describe their feelings and behaviors when switching between languages. This method allowed me to get deep, honest insights into their personal experiences rather than just simple statistics.

The results of the interviews were very revealing, especially regarding the idea of «social filtering». A major finding was that in the native language (Kazakh or Russian), students feel they have to filter their thoughts based on who they are talking to (respect for elders, status, etc.). However, in English, this filter often disappears. One participant noted: «In English, I just say what is on my mind. There is no formality, and the conversation feels much more open.» Students confirmed that they subconsciously copy the communication styles they see online. This shift isn't just about translation; it's about a change in body language and tone. English acts as a shield against the fear of «uyat» (shame). Because it is a foreign language, students

feel less judged and more willing to express individualistic ideas that might be seen as «too much» in their native cultural context.

Summing everything up, my research confirms that the «Second Language Ego» is not just a theory, but a daily reality for students in Kazakhstan. The most important takeaway is that English acts as a liberating tool for our generation. While conducting this study, I realized that in our native culture, we are often held back by a complex system of filters. We constantly have to think about hierarchy, the age of our listener, and the social pressure of «uyat». These cultural rules are deeply embedded in the way we speak Kazakh or Russian. When we switch to English, we aren't just changing our vocabulary; we are temporarily stepping out of those social constraints. I believe that English provides a «psychological safe space» where we can express parts of our personality that usually stay hidden. The students I talked to agreed that their «English self» feels more direct, more individualistic, and far less afraid of being judged for having a different opinion. At the same time, it is essential to approach this phenomenon with a careful understanding. We must find a balance: we need to continue embracing this new «English ego» for its directness and confidence, but at the same time, we have to stay true to our cultural roots and language preservation. From my point of view, this isn't about choosing one identity over another; it's about being strong in both. Moving forward, educational practices in Kazakhstan must adapt to this. Schools and teachers should not just teach grammar; they need to foster environments that recognize the intricate relationship between language and identity. In my opinion, empowering students to navigate these multiple personalities will shape a dynamic, diverse society. Ultimately, I see the journey of mastering different languages as a crucial collective experience that will ensure all voices are heard and valued in the rich, multilingual tapestry of Kazakhstan.

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ВТОРОЕ АНГЛИЙСКОЕ «Я»: КАК ИЗУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА ТРАНСФОРМИРУЕТ ЛИЧНОСТЬ И ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ В МУЛЬТИЛИНГВАЛЬНОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ

Жарылкасын Арайлым Кайратқызы

Данная статья изучает феномен второго английского «Я» среди университетских студентов Казахстана. По мере овладения английским языком многие учащиеся сталкиваются с трансформацией личности, чувствуя себя более уверенно и прямолинейно при переходе на другой язык. С помощью качественных интервью в работе анализируются причины этого сдвига в идентичности и его взаимодействие с местными культурными ценностями. Результаты показывают, что английский язык часто выступает в роли «инструмента освобождения», позволяя студентам обходить традиционные социальные фильтры и иерархии, присутствующие в их родных языках. Это указывает на то, что второе английское «Я» создает психологическое безопасное пространство для самовыражения, помогая балансировать между глобальным стилем общения и традиционными корнями.

Ключевые слова: Второе английское Я, трансформация личности, Казахстан, мультилингвизм, социальные фильтры.

АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІНДЕГІ ЕКІНШІ «МЕН»: АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІН ҮЙРЕНУДІҢ КӨПТІЛДІ ОРТАДАҒЫ ТҰЛҒА МЕН БІРЕГЕЙЛІКТІ ҚАЙТА ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУДАҒЫ РӨЛІ

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Бұл мақалада Қазақстан студенттері арасындағы ағылшын тіліндегі екінші «Мен» феноменін қарастырады. Ағылшын тілін меңгеру деңгейі артқан сайын, көптеген білім алушылар өздерінің тұлғалық қасиеттеріндегі өзгерістерді байқайды: олар басқа тілде сөйлегенде өзін еркін әрі нық сезінеді. Сұхбаттар жүргізу арқылы бұл жұмыс тұлғалық бірегейліктің өзгеру себептерін және оның жергілікті мәдени құндылықтармен өзара байланысын зерттейді. Зерттеу нәтижелері көрсеткендей, ағылшын тілі студенттерге ана тіліндегі дәстүрлі әлеуметтік сүзгілер мен иерархияларды айналып өтуге мүмкіндік беретін «еркіндік құралы» қызметін атқарады. Бұл ағылшын тіліндегі екінші «Мен» жастарға жаһандық қарым-қатынас стилі мен ұлттық тамырды тең ұстауға көмектесетін психологиялық қауіпсіз кеңістік сыйлайтынын көрсетеді.

Кілт сөздер: Ағылшын тіліндегі екінші Мен, тұлғаның өзгеруі, Қазақстан, көптілділік, әлеуметтік сүзгілер.

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