

Variation in the Language of the Russian Germans in the Kirov Region in Alien Language Environment

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Abstract: Topicality of the research on German ethnic minority in the Kirov region is determined by the general linguistic, historical-linguistic and sociolinguistic value of insular dialectology connected with peculiarities of development and functioning of dialects in the situation when separate ethnolinguistic groups exist in isolation from the main ethnic community. The Russian-Germans in the Kirov Region, whose language varieties are the object of the study, come from a variety of German settlements of the former Soviet Union: the former republic of the Volga Germans and the Ukraine.

Key words: Ethnic Germans • German dialects • The language of the Russian Germans • Interdialectic interaction • Interlingual interaction

INTRODUCTION

The German Minority in the Kirov Region - the Purpose and Objectives of the Research: The German ethnic group formed in the Vyatka region in XX century as a result of several waves of migrations - voluntary and forced ones. The first references to the Germans in the Vyatka province can be found in archival documents of VIII century where such names as Nemchinov, Nemchin (originated from the word “nemets” meaning a German in Russian) are mentioned several times (in the garrisons of the towns Urzhum, Yaransk, Malmyzh) [1, 2].

The first stage was initiated by the manifestos of Catherine II in 1762 and 1763. When they came into force there began so called ‘agricultural’ immigration of Germans to Russia, namely, to Vyatka. They were interested in the developing factory industry in the region, which required knowledge and skills. The second stage was connected with the release of prisoners of war in the Vyatka Governorate, because during the Patriotic War of 1812 and the First World War thousands of prisoners of war from France, Saxony, Italy, Poland, Bavaria, Austria and Prussia were sent to Siberia via Vyatka. The third stage is associated with the deportation of Russian Germans from the Volga region, Ukraine and Kazakhstan [3, 4].

According to statistics, 1408 Russian Germans live in the Kirov region at present. They do not belong to the autochthonous ethnic groups. Till XX century representatives of this ethnic groups didn’t comprise a unified ethnic group, unlike the Russian Germans living in the dense settlements in Ukraine, the Volga region, Transcaucasia, Saint Petersburg Governorate, Siberia and Central Asia. They were not peasants but qualified professionals and intellectuals. Their quite dense settlements appeared in the Vyatka region only in the middle of the XX century.

The study of the Russian Germans in the Kirov region began in 1999 and is made by research into 4 main aspects of functioning of the German dialects in terms of linguistic island. These aspects are historical-demographical, cultural, sociolinguistic and linguistic proper. Historical-demographical aspect is connected with obtaining and generalizing different data, including statistics ones, in regard to when the Germans come to the Vyatka land, how they settled geographically, also in regard to their population, age structure and social status. Cultural aspect helps us follow the connection between speech facts of the island dialect speakers and their culture, ethnic awareness and attitude to the neighboring ethnic groups. Sociolinguistic aspect lets us estimate the linguistic competence, define functioning fields of the

German island dialects and esteem their pragmatic value. And finally, the linguistic aspect proper defines the level of informant's mastering the language.

The topicality of this aim is chiefly determined by the fact that linguistic and social-political constituents of the languages and their dialect interaction beyond their main area are becoming now a real social problem.

The present research is aimed at finding peculiarities of the unique language form which is the mixed German dialects, systematizing the linguistic mechanism of languages interaction which arise, making a notional system for creation of a single theory of their development under conditions of alien languages and dialects surroundings, analyzing the main trends of their functioning under conditions of bilingualism and multilingualism, forming technique of examining the prosodic characteristics and creating the concept of prosodic interference for the German dialects under review.

The empiric base of the present research was formed on the materials of dialectological and ethnographic expeditions to 6 settlements of the Verchnekamskiy district in the Kirov region taken in the years of 1999 – 2011. The data of these expeditions formed the bank which includes records of 26 informants speaking at the total duration of 50 hours and questionnaires with sociolinguistic and historical-demographical information about each informant. Due to analysis of the received theoretical and test data the following conclusions were made.

The Language of the Russian Germans in the Kirov Region: It should be noted that issues of the language contacts are studied on the basis of linguistic materials of informants who saved and still speak their native dialects (idiolects) in everyday life. These people kept original ethnic characteristics with deportation, i.e. their forced migration influencing the process of remaining the traditional traits and appearing of new ones in their culture. Original peculiarities of their way of life are still remaining in a way in their habits, traditions, day-to-day life but recently they are best seen in spheres of spiritual culture and national self-awareness.

In sociolinguistic terms, the following forms of bilingualism of the Russian Germans in the Kirov region can be distinguished in the given language situation. An active German-Russian bilingualism is typical of senior age group. This form of bilingualism is large-scale, since

all the Russian Germans of this group equally speak both German and Russian. The specific forms of bilingualism characteristic of medium and junior age groups are passive-active German-Russian bilingualism and active Russian monolingualism.

Interdialectic Interaction in the Language of the Russian Germans in Kirov Region: Sound-phonemic (segmental) level is basic for the research. It should be noted that the main consonantism difference between idiolects under review is based firstly on spirantization of intervocalic occlusives $b > v$ (w), $g > j$, $g > x$, ζ ; secondly, on different ways of realization of consonantal clusters including sch; and thirdly on realization of the second consonant shift. In terms of vocalism opposition of the dialects is more successive firstly on the basis of presence/absence of the vowels widening for $i > e$, $u > o$; secondly on the basis of presence/absence of epenthesis between smooth r,l and velar sonant ch, reduction of unstressed vowels in pre-stressed syllables. Along with these basic diachronic processes, the data for the following types of variation were collected: interchange of nasalized and non-nasalized vowels, umlaut, refraction and reduction of unstressed vowels. The results of research let us state the mixed character of the dialects under review at the segmental level [5, 6, 7].

The present research was the first to include complex experimental phonetic analysis of suprasegmental structure of the German speech of the bilingual Germans in the Kirov region. Its algorithm is the following: 1) segmentation of intonation phrases with computer program PRAAT (6700 units) [8, 9]; 2) analysis of complete intonation phrases (500 units), incomplete intonation phrases (250 units); 3) intonation transcription of nuclear outlines of complete and incomplete intonation phrases.

This research proves the hypothesis on the mixed character of the dialects, not only at segmental level but at suprasegmental one as well, which makes it possible to form a concept of prosodic interference for the German island dialects under review.

Interlingual Interaction in the Language of the Russian Germans in Kirov Region: According to results of the present research, the German dialects under review fell under great influence of the Russian language during long-term development in the alien language surrounding. This development has brought about considerable changes at all the levels of the dialects structure.

Analysis of empiric material made it possible to systematize interlingual and interdialect borrowings at phonetic level (complete reduction of the final vowel), at morphologic level (use of the borrowed nouns with an article in accordance with gender of the borrowed noun; forming plural and singular of the nouns; noun declension), and at the syntactical level (word order in a German sentence corresponds to that of a Russian sentence).

When studying an interfering influence of the native German language on alien Russian, it was experimentally specified that Russian speech of the bilingual Germans is not homogeneous and varies from 'having practically no accent' to 'unnatural' for the monolingual Russians. This phenomenon is viewed in terms of intermediate system, i.e. interlanguage which doesn't coincide either with native German or non-native Russian and performs an adaptive function in bilingual mind.

CONCLUSION

The established language peculiarities in speech of the Germans all over the "linguistic island" of the Kirov region and systematization of these peculiarities prove specific functioning of this ethnolinguistic group, separated from the main ethnic area and surrounded by alien language. The Russian Germans in the region under review have formed a new language community with unique subculture having no analogues at their historical motherland. This community has developed differently, which was determined by specific social and language conditions. Unique nature of the ethnic German minority group under review is characterized first of all by mixture of the dialects surrounded by alien language and diversity of their forms.

Thus, the language of the Russian Germans living in the Kirov region is the result of creating a new specific regional variant of the German language which differs from other German island dialects and native dialects of Germany, due to recurrent mixture and intense influence of the Russian language [10].

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