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## Udmurt–Russian Bilingualism and Prosodic Interference

Udmurtia's voluntary joining with centralized Russian state in the middle of the 16 century appeared to be the precondition of spreading bilingualism among the Udmurts. Gradually bilingualism started to be the state-supported language policy in Udmurtia.

At present two main languages – Udmurt and Russian are used on the territory of Udmurtia and both of them have certain social functions which are determined by different factors such as ethnic stuff of the population, settling, etc. In accordance with the last census of 1989 the total number of the Udmurts in Russia is 714 thousand people, and the 2/3 of them live in Udmurtia. Historically it turned out that both in the past and at present the most of the Udmurts lived and still live in the country side (62,3%), whereas the most of the Russians all the time lived in big cities. It is quite clear that village Udmurts and city-dwellers are different in their language competence and behaviour, for example: there are more Udmurts in the cities who do not speak Udmurt because they do not know their native language (9,6%) whereas in the villages the percentage of Udmurts not speaking their native language is more less (1,5%).

There are also differences in language competence among the Udmurts living in different ethnographic regions – in the North, in the South and in the Centre of Udmurtia. Udmurts living in the North of Udmurtia use Russian language for their everyday needs more often compared with those Udmurts living in the South who prefer to speak their native language.

Bilingual Udmurts read fiction and periodicals both in Udmurt and Russian, but books and newspapers in Russian are more preferable in the North of Udmurtia. Radio and TV programmes are also broadcasted in two languages, but Udmurt programmes are more popular in the South of Udmurtia and less popular in the North of Republic.

All official papers in Udmurtia are registered in Russian language and the privileges of Russian are very strong in different fields of science, in industry and in government apparatus.

Despite all this, Udmurt retained its position, though not very strong, in schools and university and remained the language of scientific publications.

In winter 1994, an official commission started to work in Udmurtia in order to make an official document giving Udmurt language a legal status in Udmurtia and the project of Udmurt Constitution was adopted and there was the language law which granted the Udmurt language the status of the state language.

Putting the language law into practice is complicated and still the infiltration of Russian influence into social, political and cultural life in Udmurtia is very strong and vivid. Russian also penetrates the structure of Udmurt language, but there is the so called back influence, when despite of all, the rules of native language appear to be strong and it is even able to damage the structure of the second language on all its levels. And it was only at the end of eighties when Udmurt scientists started to study problems of interference connected with bilingualism in Udmurtia and it was done in the sociologic and ethnolinguistic aspects mainly.

The given research deals with the analysis of some cases of prosody interference. Our main concern was to describe and to compare prosody features of Russian and Udmurt questions and to find some prosody mistakes in Russian speech of the Udmurts.

The material consisted of read dialogues representing different question types and answers on them. Russian and Udmurt dialogues were quite similar in their context. Two male speakers (Russian dictator, age 43; Udmurt dictator, age 45) and two female speakers (Russian dictator, age 52; Udmurt dictator, age 50) were the informants. Hence, fifty Udmurt and Russian questions of different types (special question, general question, alternative question and echoed question) in the pronunciation of the four dictors have been taken for the analysis.

Ten Russian listeners experienced in phonetics assessed prosody mistakes in Russian questions pronounced by Udmurts. Listeners should: write down the tonogramme of a sentence, place stress markers in a phrase, mark with "+" sentences with normal Russian intonation and with "-" sentences with non-Russian intonation, choose one of the characteristics of non-Russian intonation among those mentioned in the list: prolonging of the last unstressed syllable, damaging rhythmical structure of a sentence, using wrong melody.

The results of listening experiment showed that the discrepancy in the auditive categorization was higher than expected, so the prosodic acoustic composition of the sentences was studied. We analysed the fundamental frequency, intensity, duration and sound quality distribution in the sentences under research.

Acoustic analysis was done in the Computer centre of the Physiology Institute named after I. P. Pavlov of Russian Academy of Sciences.

The data of acoustic measurement confirms listening impressions. Compare the intonograms of Udmurt and Russian interrogative sentences it was possible to conclude that prosodic system of Udmurt influences Russian prosody.

The manifestation of this influence can be observed in the following:

– both in Udmurt and Russian there are falling and rising tones used in different types of questions;

– there is falling tone in Udmurt and Russian special questions, but the Udmurt fall is glide and it ends on a low level, so Russian special question is also characterized by these Udmurt prosody features instead of having more sloping fall and much higher level;

– the commonest Russian rise normally used in general questions and certain non-final sense-groups always occurs within the last stressed syllable of a sentence no matter whether this syllable is final or followed by one or more unstressed syllables and this rise is steep. In Udmurt rising tone manifestates itself not only within the last stressed syllable, but it may be continued also in the tail; and it differs in the shape from its Russian counterpart – it is low and glide. An Udmurt – like rise which is used in Russian general questions pronounced by Udmurt dictors in Russian language could be met in contrastive elliptical general questions with the conjunction "a" followed by a noun;

– there are no intonation differences between Udmurt and Russian echoed questions and they are characterized by the high narrow rise in both languages;

– unstressed syllables in Russian questions are pronounced by the Udmurts without reduction and it damages rhythmical structure of Russian interrogative sentence and becomes longer in its duration. Duration of Russian questions also becomes longer due to the fact that in general Udmurt vowels appeared to be longer than Russian ones.

Udmurt language is characterized by long-standing traditions and despite of unfavorable conditions of Russian influence it has been able to preserve its structure which needs to be used and examined more widely.