

## СЕКЦИЯ: ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

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### ON BILINGUALISM AND LEXICAL-SEMANTIC INTERFERENCE

**Аннотация.** *Статья посвящена явлениям билингвизма и лексико-семантической интерференции. В статье рассматривается современная языковая ситуация в Украине, характеризующаяся функционированием двух близкородственных языков. Авторы делают вывод, что следствием сложившейся ситуации является возникновение большого количества ошибок в обоих языках.*

**Ключевые слова:** *билингвизм, межъязыковая интерференция, суржик.*

**Abstract.** *The article deals with the phenomenon of bilingualism and lexical-semantic interference. The linguistic situation in modern Ukraine is characterized by functioning of two closely related languages. The authors conclude that the consequence of this situation is appearance large number of mistakes in both languages.*

**Key words:** *bilingualism, translingual interference, mixed dialect (surzhyk).*

Bilingualism is a widespread phenomenon in the modern world. Therefore, the study of language contacts and phenomena caused by these contacts is especially important for modern Ukraine. The phenomenon of bilingualism, either individual or mass one, is connected with the phenomenon of interlingual interference. The purpose of our study is to analyze some peculiarities of the bilingualism of the inhabitants of Kharkov. Such research is topical due to a range of peculiarities and specificity of closely related language contacts, since the area of languages confusion arising in the condition of mass bilingualism, when certain features of one language penetrate into the system of another language, has been studied not enough yet.

Typology of modern bilingualism has been sufficiently covered in many works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars from the point of view of various conceptual positions. L.V. Shcherba considers the phenomenon of bilingualism in the following way: "... Any study of the second language leads to bilingualism, which is of the two types - pure and mixed. It is pure when there are no comparisons between the languages, no parallels, when translation from one language to another is essentially impossible for the bearers of such bilingualism... Bilingualism will be mixed in cases where the second language... is acquired through the first... With mixed bilingualism, the newly assimilated language always undergoes this or that influence of the first language, at least in the sense of categorizing the phenomena of reality" [1, p. 6-8]. In his work "On the concept of mixing languages"

L.V. Shcherba gives a more detailed description of the types of bilingualism [1, p. 40-53].

Yu.D. Descheriev and I.F. Protchenko in their work define two psychological types of bilingualism: combined and correlated which correspond to the "pure" and "mixed bilingualism" of L.V. Shcherba [2]. E.M. Vereshchagin identifies three levels of bilingualism: receptive (which means understanding speech products belonging to the secondary language system), reproductive (implying the ability to reproduce the information heard or read) and productive (including not only understanding and reproduction, but also the construction of integral meaningful utterance) [3, p.134].

R.T. Bell examines the phenomenon of bilingualism from the position of "switching" from language to language or "switching codes". He uses the terminology of W.Weinreich and C.Osgood, singling out mixed and co-ordinate types of bilingualism. The mixed (in the understanding of R.T.Bell) bilingualism assumes "a single semantic base connected with two input mechanisms and two exit mechanisms," and the coordinative one is "two semantic bases, each of which is associated with specific linguistic input-output systems" [4, p.158-159]. Certain attention should be paid to R.T. Bell's views on the so-called "inter-language" of a bilingual which is characterized by the presence of interference elements from the language L1 into the language L2: "Statements of the individual speaking L2 are neither statements in L2 nor L1, but are surface manifestations of" inter-language "- a language system formal characteristics of which place it at some point between L1 and L2. Continuing this thought, the author notes the inconsistency of the definition of a bilingual as a person who is fluent in more than one language, except cases when a person reaches the highest point on the scale of possession of two or more languages. He recognizes that bilingualism forms a range of skills that extends from the initial knowledge in the second language at one pole through subordinate and co-ordinate types to mixed bilingualism" [4, p. 169-171].

With some difference in views on the types of bilingualism, most linguists agree that bilingualism is a real social and linguistic situation, the essence of which is the coexistence and interaction of the two languages within the framework of one language collective. From another point of view, bilingualism is the same command of two languages. W.Weinreich notes that there are differences between linguistic systems in contact. These differences make it difficult to simultaneously master the language systems. Concerning the contact of language systems, Weinreich distinguishes a number of possibilities: 1) "the language A can be generally replaced by the language B, in this case we are talking about the language shift"; 2) "the languages A and B can be used alternately, depending on the requirements of the situation; in this case we speak about switching from A to B and vice versa; 3) "...there can be a merging of languages A and B into a single language system" [5, p. 9-10].

The modern language situation in Ukraine is characterized by the functioning of two closely related languages - Ukrainian and Russian. The collapse of the Soviet Union significantly influenced the position of the Russian minority in Ukraine. Since 1990 the use of the Russian language has been declining, but despite this it remains an important means of communication in Ukraine, especially in large cities, and Kharkov is no exception. Here you can hear the Russian language everywhere: in the streets, cafe, and public transport. On the one hand, Kharkov was the first capital of Ukraine, the centre of Ukrainian writing and a source of culture, on the

other hand, the policy of russification was intensively pursued there as in almost all big cities in Ukraine, and probably due to the fact that Kharkov is a border city of Ukraine, this process has been taken place much more intensively here than in other large cities. According to the 2001 census, Ukrainian language was native to 67.5% of the population.

Is the situation of bilingualism real in large cities of eastern Ukraine? Is it really true that all Ukrainians are fluent in both Russian and Ukrainian? According to statistical data only 40-47% of the adult population of Ukraine speak Ukrainian language only [6, p. 337]. The Ukrainian and Russian languages coexist in Ukraine for several centuries and now continue to function in parallel closely interacting with each other. Bilingualism in Ukraine is mixed, both ethnic and cultural. As for the language situation in Kharkov, the knowledge of the Ukrainian language by Russian residents of the city depends on the generation they belong to. Representatives of the older generation, as a rule, speak only Russian. The youth understands that without the knowledge of the Ukrainian language professional and social self-development is impossible in the future and speaks two languages equally. Sometimes young Kharkovites reproach the older Russian-speaking generation that they disregard the Ukrainian language and do not try to learn the language of the country they live in. In our opinion, the main role is played here by socio- and psycholinguistic factors: it is difficult to learn the language being an old person, besides, contacts with other people are limited, there is no orientation to career growth as well, etc. We should also mention a number of factors: the absence of problems in understanding each other among Russians and Ukrainians in everyday life, and the dominance of the Russian language in certain spheres, for example, in the fields of engineering, in the fields of mathematics, physics, and chemistry. In general we can state the transfer of monolingualism of parents to the Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism of the younger generation. The latter also have an alternative in choosing a language (Russian or Ukrainian) and the ability to combine both languages. Therefore, the switching of language codes from Russian to Ukrainian is a very strong characteristic of the Russian language in modern Kharkov. For example, a child in a kindergarten communicates in Ukrainian with a tutor and other children, and when coming home they switch to Russian communicating with parents and older relatives.

Carrying out our research we analyzed the language situation in the Kharkov city which can be described in this way: the population, as a rule, speaks two languages and speaks in Russian mostly, and less in Ukrainian and surzhik. A variety of language interference is a natural consequence of the contact and use of both languages. The way of mixing Russian and Ukrainian vocabulary, as well as mutual interference in other spheres, can vary depending on the speaker. There is much Ukrainian interference with the Russian language and vice versa. The mutual influence of languages is rather strong. The phenomenon of surzhik is typical for Eastern Ukraine. The Russian language in Kharkov is still prestigious; it is used by most of the city both in everyday life and the professional sphere. A considerable part of the local population already knows the Ukrainian language well although there are much fewer people who communicate in Ukrainian freely.

If we do not take measures to improve the language situation in Ukraine, our state language may eventually disappear. Ireland could be an example of such negative consequences of a thoughtless language policy, where the loss of the

national language was almost complete due to the fact that after gaining independence, Ireland did not make decision to declare the Irish a state language and did not regulate the language processes in the country. Now "Edina kraina" ("Single State") is a national slogan in form, and behind it there is a non-national content. Some linguists of the past believed that bilingualism is a positive feature of the social life of the peoples of the USSR. For example, academician I. Bilodid, the author of the theory of "bilingualism of Ukrainians," called Russian "the second language of Ukrainians" [7, p. 38]. After the last Maidan the slogan "Yedyna kraina / Yedinaia strana" ("Single State") was voiced, which became a symbol of a new language policy. This is not a new slogan. In fact it maintains the Soviet academician I. Bilodid's idea. The people are nominally national in form, and most of them are Russian in content at the same time.

Considering bilingualism in Ukraine it is necessary to take into account the two-way influence of Russian and Ukrainian language on each other, in particular, interference processes. Following W.Weinreich and a number of other researchers, interlingual interference is defined in our work as deviations from the norms of both languages. These deviations are present in the speech of bilingual speakers as a result of the fact that they speak more than one language, that is, as a result of the contact of two languages in the speaker's consciousness. The internal, stimulating condition for interference is semantic mediation, the identification of the plan for keeping the native language with a non-native one, whereby interference is the result of an incomplete correction of the content plan and, as a consequence, a plan for the expression of the primary native language in the transition to the secondary non-native language. Thus, interference is the result of incorrect programming of a verbal utterance manifested in speech in a non-native language. Studies in this area are performed by L.T. Masenko, A.A. Taranenko, V.M. Trub, A.A. Serbenskaia, O.S.Cheremaskaia etc. The interference is considered the interaction of the language systems under bilingualism, when uncontrolled transfer of certain elements of one language to another occurs. It should be noted that more often one of the languages is subjected to deeper degree of interference than the other. This is the result of various extralinguistic factors. Interlingual interference is the inevitable consequence of a bilingual language situation. It manifests itself at all levels of the language: phonetic, grammatical, and lexical. Interferences at the level of phonetics are rather significant. Many informants said that during their stay in Russia they were told that by their accent they can immediately be identified Ukrainian residents.

In linguistics this degree of interlingual interaction is defined in different ways: superinterference, hyperinterference, or simply surzhik. We believe that surzhik is the most negative consequence of Russian-Ukrainian language "relationships." According to L.T. Masenko, surzhik is the Ukrainian language with a significant admixture of elements of the Russian language [8]. Surzhik is a kind of mixed language which uses a large number of Russian words in Ukrainian phonetic design. And at the present stage we do not observe a tendency to eradicate of this phenomenon. On the contrary: there is a phenomenon of a specific fixation of surzhik on radio and television, and the reinforcement of artificial bilingualism in many analytical programs of Ukrainian TV channels and even new popular TV shows as well. Ukrainian philologist Yuri Shevchuk called this type of Ukrainian media language policy "destructive language schizophrenia." [9]. He provides a

perfect example: 44 million US citizens speak Spanish. This segment of the population is served by high-quality Spanish programs, without English language. The English language is turned off when it is used, and a translation is being sent. Channels and programs must be monolingual. Otherwise, it eternalize the division by language feature and both nations lose their identity, both languages are destroyed. This format deprives Russians who love the Ukrainian language and want to know it, of the ability to learn it, and as for the Ukrainians who want to know the Russian language the situation is similar. Because they constantly hear surzhik and their consciousness is constantly divided. In other countries a person capable of learning a foreign language can learn the language, sinking in the language environment and hearing the language everywhere. In Ukraine, a foreigner does not hear a single clean language, but a constantly mixed language.

Linguists tend to regard surzhik as a variant of interfered speech. Many linguists used to say that surzhik exists only in the speech of the poorly educated strata of the population. But in our opinion, the situation changed long ago and the level of education is not the main criterion determining the language competence of the individual. In this case, more important aspect is the language situation and the speaker's attitude to his own speech.

Interference is reflected in the vocabulary rather clearly. However, the lexical language level is the most difficult for analysis, especially when it goes about the interaction of closely related languages. The basic vocabulary of Ukrainian and Russian languages largely goes back to the common root. This, on the one hand, facilitates lexical analysis, and on the other hand, it makes our task more complicated. The usage of the Ukrainian language is much broader than the literary norm and allows the use of a large number of the vocabulary common with Russian in colloquial speech. The similarity of words and their analogues or complete identity are also the determining factors in the choice of particular lexeme by a speaker. The consequence of such a language situation is the occurrence of a large number of errors in both languages. Such errors are called "interlingual homonyms (paronyms)". For example, there are frequent mistakes in the use of some verbs: ukr. [mishati] (meaning – 'mix, stir') and rus. [mishat'] (meaning –'to interfere with'). In the speech of Ukrainians you can often find russisms, for example, *glyba* ('clay') instead of ukr. *bryla* ('boulder'), *gadalka* ('fortune-teller') instead of *vorozhka*, *devyasil* instead of *oman*, etc. Interference is also found on the level of stable phrases and phraseological hybrids: Ukr. *sluzhyty prykladom* ('to be an example') instead of the right variant *buti*, use the *but'* instead of the right *buti*, *spivpayayut dany* instead *zbigayutsya dani* (the influence of the Russian 'data coincide'), *stay rivnodushnym* instead of *zbayduzhiti* (the Russian influence 'become indifferent'), *pidrostaiuche pokolinnia* instead of *pamolod*, *molode pokolinya* (the influence of the Russian 'younger generation').

It should be noted that mutual borrowings in both languages are often used and less recognized by speakers as borrowing. We can assume that the tendency of irresponsible borrowing among the younger Kharkovites will increase in future. The younger generation of Russians is more open to compromises with Ukrainian-speaking countrymen and has been adapting to them more and more. Their language is increasingly influenced by Ukrainian one too.

What is the way out of the current situation of "language insanity"? The way out is the only one: to prohibit the mixing of languages on radio and television. As a

result, it is possible to predict the competition of two cultural products, which we have not had for 25 years, and which will lead to a new circle of development of Russian and Ukrainian languages in Ukraine. Let's hope that the current language situation is a temporary transitional stage for the free development of both languages.

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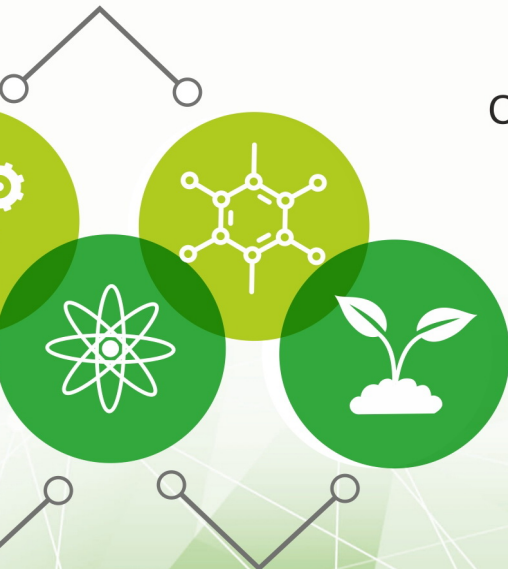
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