

Russian Speech in Kalmykia: History and Current State

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Abstract

The article deals with the problems of Russian speech culture at the example of Republic of Kalmykia, one of the national constituents of the Russian Federation. The history of appearance, development, functioning and current state of Russian language, the state language of Russian Federation, is successively traced in the article at the example of Kalmykia. The article shows that the Kalmyks' level of Russian language proficiency depends on human factors, first of all, on age. The impact of naive language in Russian colloquial speech of Kalmyk of the aged generation is felt to the fullest extent. Russian colloquial speech of the middle and younger generations is in keeping with general tendencies, typical of Russian colloquial speech in whole.

Keywords: Bilingualism, linguistic situation, Russian literary language, speech culture, literary standards, Russian Federation, Republic of Kalmykia.

1. Introduction

The linguistic situation, developed at present in multiethnic Russia, is a result of implemented national-language policy [1; 2]. In all national territorial subdivisions of the Russian Federation, Russian language, alongside with the national language, is a state one, the indigenous inhabitants of these regions are the bilinguals. For all users, irrespectively of the speaker's nationality, "the standards of Russian literary language are compulsory for all" [3; 4]. A British historian Jeffrey Hosking considers, that Russification was included to the politics of the Russian Empire, as it contributed to greater concentration of power. In his opinion, the purpose of Russification was to form the feeling of belonging to Russia, its past and traditions in all nations of the Russian Empire [5]. There is no denying that each region of the Russian Federation formed their own, considerably special social and linguo-cultural conditions for language functioning, which form the peculiar features of the Russian speech (RS). However, the determining factor of the linguistic situation in whole is the status of Russian language as a state one. The real linguistic picture shows rather high proficiency level of oral variety of Russian language in unofficial sphere, whereas in official conditions, the communication in Russian language is impeded, different deviations from standards are observed. In whole, it creates an impression of insufficient proficiency of Russian speech culture [6]. In this connection, it is of top priority to investigate that factual linguistic material, which really exists in different regions of polyethnic Russia, to develop the problems of Russian speech culture in conditions of multilingualism. The present article deals with these problems at the example of the Republic of Kalmykia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Russian language in conditions of multilingualism

Russian language in the territory of Russia is unequal, what is conditioned by its existence. In some regions, it interacts with national languages, in the other ones - with the dialects of Russian or other languages. The color of the Russian speech in national communities is formed by the national language, it makes the "local" speech brightly locally colored. Typological similarities or differences of Russian and national languages promote the formation of peculiar accent. Besides, in modern times, vernacular, slang and foreign languages influence greatly on the functioning of Russian literary language (RLL). Activation of these processes is connected with the conscious desire of speakers for relaxed, vivid, substandard speech. In areas of weakened influence of RLL, to which, firstly, belong the national regions, all these processes interact.

2.2 *Russian language in Kalmykia.*

Russia is a multinational state. More than 180 nations live in its territory. Kalmykia, one of 21 republics of the Russian Federation, is also a polyethnic region, the representatives of more than 90 nationalities and ethnic groups live there. The Kalmyks constitute more than 50% of the republican population, 37% is presented by the Russians, the Dargins, the Chechens, the Kazakhs, the Ukrainians, the Byelorussians, the Germans, the Estonians, the Koreans and others also live there.

In compliance with the Law about Languages of Nations of the RSFSR and the Law about Kalmyk ASSR, Russian and Kalmyk languages are the state languages of the Republic of Kalmykia. Although these languages are juridically declared equal, in practice they differ in the sphere of usage, the level of functional development. This situation became a result of interaction of objective reasons, such as tragic past and number of the Kalmyk, social need and traditions in the use of native language, the development degree of national consciousness. However, the determining factor, from our point of view, was the national state policy, pursued in the USSR: all Soviet period of the Kalmyk existence gives evidence of gradual reduction of the Kalmyk size and narrowing of the sphere of use of the Kalmyk language, as a result of language policy, pursued in the USSR, the wars and Stalinist genocide regarding Kalmyks.

2.3 *Functional interrelations of Russian and Kalmyk languages.*

The main feature of modern linguistic situation in Kalmykia is the predominance of Russian language in all spheres of use, rather high RS proficiency level of medium and younger generations, whereas different interference peculiarities are observed in RCS of aged generations. One of the objective reasons, formed the modern linguistic situation in Kalmykia, is presented by the changes, conditioned by migrations of change in number, distribution and structure of Kalmykia population.

According to the General Census I (1897), 95.33% of population of the Kalmyk steppe was constituted by the Kalmyk, 3.34% - by the Russian, 1.33% - by the others. The main feature of population dynamics of all subsequent years is the intense migration gain of the Russians. This tendency was formed before the General Census I, which fixed the changes in population structure of the Kalmyk steppe for the first time. The beginning of peasant migration to the Kalmyk steppes belongs to the end of the 18 - the beginning of the 19 century [7].

At the beginning, the migration had a spontaneous and non-mass character. Gradually, the quantity of emigrants increased, legal peasant settlements appeared. The settlements appeared in the places of missionary camps (Chilgir, Kegulta, Bistyurta etc.), in trade places (Kalmyk Market, Yashkulsky Market), in places of post service and nomad camps [8]. Migration of peasants from densely populated areas to Kalmyk steppe and seizing of Kalmyk lands became one of the reasons, why a part of the Kalmyks moved to Dzungaria [1771]. The migration was a part of state measures, aimed at sanctification of the Kalmyks to Christianity and sedentary life. Intensification of commodity economy and trade resulted in the increase in significance of roads, crossed the Kalmyk steppe and served to transport the goods from Volga ex docks to the cities of Caucasus and Crimea, as well as the goods to be sold in Kalmyk camping grounds. The settlements with Russian population were created on these roads. Gradually, the main feature of demographic picture of Kalmykia started to form - the increase of share of the Kalmyk population, which played a dominant role in formation of modern linguistic situation. In the following years, this tendency was strengthened, and another tendency was formed - the reduction of Kalmyk population against the background of increase of total population number.

Because of social cultural transformations, held in the first years of Soviet power, the role of Russian language was strengthened in the region. It was conditioned by the appearance of new notions and realias, connected with the establishment of socialistic style of life, lack of teaching materials in Kalmyk language etc. Russian language becomes the language of new life: the Kalmyk were joined in medicine and hygiene through Russian language, as the number of literate Kalmyk was insignificant. The fact, that Russian language is being spread in written form and in different spheres, becomes typical. Because of limited number of teachers from Kalmyks and lack of textbooks in Kalmyk language, teaching was mainly carried out in Russian language. In course of time, Russian begins to function in the sphere of art, the Kalmyks got acquainted with theatrical performances, mainly of agitation character. Press and Russian fiction played a great role in consolidation of position of the Russian language. The First All-Soviet Union Congress of Writers (1943) influenced greatly on the development of national literature and distribution of literature in Russian language.

In those years, education becomes one of the most important channels to distribute Russian language. The development of secondary and higher school, science, engineering, art, training of national staff from the first days of the Soviet power was closely connected with Russian language.

By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, Russian language in Kalmykia became a language of study at the

level of secondary school. At that time, a lot of terms were borrowed from Russian language and through Russian language of international terms. The changes in population structure of Kalmykia, the formation of its multinational composition, migration of population, conditioned by social political reasons (focus on collectivization and industrialization) contributed to the distribution of Russian language. Thus, the sphere of usage of Russian gradually expands, its significance grows. In pre-war years, Russian becomes the language of communication for the part of population, and the language of secondary and special education.

The Great patriotic War and deportation of the Kalmyks to Siberia (1943-1956) become an important period in Russian language assimilation by the Kalmyks, in increase of its role and extension of its functioning. Both at the front and in Siberia, Russian becomes the language of international communication for the Kalmyks, the young Kalmyk generation assimilates Russian in oral colloquial form, Russian gradually displaces native language from all spheres of use.

After the Kalmyk nation rehabilitation (1956), the federal status of the Kalmyk was restored, they came back to their motherland. The migration factor becomes the leading one in population dynamics in 1950-1960. In 1959, the Kalmyk constituted 47% of population of the republic. A clear feedback is traced between the share of Kalmyk population and growth rate of republican population. Russian language was expanded not only due to inflow of migrants, but also due to the opening of schools, educational institutions, including the Kalmykia Pedagogical Institute, theatre, as well radio-, television, newspaper and magazines. The number of books annually published in Russian, increases, consolidating the positions of the Russian language. The number of Russian population increased due to shock-work construction, declared in the territory of Kalmykia; the Kalmyks also went out to building sites and earnings to another regions; it consolidated the positions of Russian language. Shortly after the rehabilitation of the Kalmyk nation and creation of the republic, because of lack of specialists in Kalmykia, national classes were closed, Russian language becomes the language of teaching and nursery education everywhere. The Kalmyk language and native literature became one of school subjects, similar to Mathematics, foreign languages etc.

At present, Russian language has no limits in the sphere of distribution. It is the language of education, information, science, culture, office management, business and everyday communication. It is impossible to imagine the life of modern Kalmyks without Russian language. Its role in the life of young generation is huge, and it has a tendency to increase.

2.4 Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyks.

Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyk (RCSK) is not homogenous. The quality of RCSK depends on social factors: age, level of education, sphere of activity of the definite person. Age is the most important feature, as RS was assimilated by the Kalmyks of different generations through various forms, in different conditions, and it is shown in the speech quality. That is why, the peculiarities of Kalmyk RCS of aged, middle and younger generations will be considered below.

2.5 Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyks of aged generation.

RCSK of aged generation presents the mixed speech, where, depending on situation, either Russian, or Kalmyk can be the principle, however, the involvement of split-level elements of passive language is obligatory. It is the consequence of the fact, that the Kalmyk of older generation assimilated Russian, still having the system of native language, formed in childhood. As a rule, they assimilated Russian through bookish-written form, hence, it is typical for them (especially for the Kalmyk intellectuals) to pronounce words letter by letter, without vowel reduction in weak positions, as well as some bookishness of speech, the use of participial and verbal adverb constructions, what is supported by the Kalmyk language, where they are frequently met, it is not typical to use slang, colloquialisms and expressions, they do not use the reduced elements for stylistic purposes. In this relation, their speech is characterized by some degree of purism.

The impact of native language on RCSK of aged population is shown at all language levels. The phonetic peculiarities in implementation of definite phonemes are indicative (for instance, the pronunciation of half soft instead of soft consonant phonemes; the reduction of end vowels of the word (bolnits (hospitals), shkol (schools), mashin (cars), the insertion of vowel before the initial *p* (*r*) of the word (aradiv (radio), yarshik (box)) etc.

Kalmyk lexical inclusions to the RCSK are quite numerous. The reasons of inclusion of the word from native language can be different: lack of Russian equivalent, expressive brightness of the word of native language, deficit of time to select the appropriate Russian word in conditions of spontaneous speech. More frequently, in RCS, people of this group use the Kalmyk kinship terms, ethnonyms, words, denoting parts of speech, the important for person actions, realias of national everyday life, Kalmyk set phrases. Mismatch of lexical collocability, divergences in semantic structure,

volume of word meanings, word for word translation of words and expressions from the native language into Russian result in lexico-semantic interference. In RCS, the Kalmyk affixes can be used to express Russian root morphemes: platysan (your own dresses), gorodas (from the city), podrugin (her friend), sosedas (from the neighbors), dumidlad (from the verb to think + affix ad) etc. It is possible to use Russian affixes with Kalmyk roots: Badmashka (from the proper name Badma), eezhenka (from eezh "grandmother").

The Kalmyk postpositions can be used instead of Russian prepositions: Moska deer (deer "in") lived; lift dotr (dotr "inside") entered etc. There are also possible the omissions and wrong use of Russian prepositions, conditioned by the lack of prepositions in Kalmyk language: Tselyi mesyats lezhal bolnitst - The whole month he stayed hospital (the preposition *v* (in) is omitted, the affix *t* is used)). The most stable are the mistakes, conditioned by grammatical interference, the disturbance in collocability of nouns, adjectives, ordinal numbers, pronouns, participles, generic verb forms under the frames of word combination, conditioned by typological difference of Kalmyk and Russian languages (in particular, there is no category of gender in Kalmyk language, coordination, as a type of syntactic relation, is not used). For instance: Ona veselyi bila *v* detstve - She was joyful in childhood. The mistakes, connected with the category of number, are also possible: Molodezh tantsuyut - The youth (in Kalmyk language, bahchud "youth" is a noun in plural) dance.

At syntactic level, the impact of native language is seen in the use of RCS of complete Kalmyk sentences, constructions, not typical for RCS (expanded), preservation of Kalmyk order of the sentence (final position of the predicate). Thus, RCSK of the aged generation is a speech with violation of standards of RLL, where the strong impact of native language is felt.

2.6 Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyks of middle generation.

The impact of native language in the RCS of the Kalmyks of middle generation is manifested less than in the abovementioned group. It is possible to say that, in whole, it is the speech, build in compliance with RCS standards, where the Kalmyk national personality is felt. The interaction of two opposite tendencies is seen in RCSK: the impact of official style, on the one hand, and slang and vernacular on the other hand. The abundance of words and expressions from the official style can be explained by the habit to state clerical speech, elaborated within the decades of Soviet times, as well as the impossibility to find quickly a required set phrase in spontaneous speech - a ready-made standard is used. Bookish words and expressions in RCSK are found side by side with slang and vernacular vocabulary, breaking the stylistic unity of the text. The reason, why slang words and colloquialisms appear in CS, is not only the ignorance of stylistic norms of Russian language, but also a conscious desire of speakers for speech expressivity. These features of RCSK are in compliance with common pattern: expression and standard - two particularly differential characteristics of modern Russian speech [9].

With the purpose for expression, the speakers can use emotional means of native language. It is typical to use the Kalmyk phraseological units: - What a hot day, *chamaa* ("certainly") buy the air conditioner; He ran nusan unzhulchkad ("sniveling"). There can be used the substandard words from the native language: *Belkhechkad* ("dilapidating") laying; - Threw in parts *shulmus* ("doddle"). It is possible, that ethnically non-Russians perceive the Russian language, firstly, as a mean of communication, and leave the emotive function for the native language. The analysis shows that the speakers use ready-made lexical units, the language game is not typical of them, the inventiveness in the use of linguistic means is not mentioned, as well as the construction of special clauses or the use of figural expressions. In whole, the vocabulary is not characterized by the diversity, numerous repetitions are typical, the synonymic means are not used. The selection of words is determined by communicative, but not the aesthetic purposes.

A general law, determining the syntactic structure of RCSK, is the economy of linguistic means. Thus, it is typical to contract several sentences into one construction by omitting semantically unloaded components, including conjunctions: We talked with her, the flat is bought in the village; to plant it, it will grow the following summer. Redundancy is the opposite tendency: let us not be, let us begin etc.

It is typical to use the words with bright colloquial coloring: The salary is not paid even from November; I have to say you.

For the purpose of expression, the expressive means of different levels of the language can be used. First of all, it is intonation, bright, flexible, thanks to modification of which different shades of meaning are communicated. The increased expression of speech can be communicated by the use of diminutive-hypocoristic suffixes. Proper appraisive words are used (dumbo, bullyboy), colloquialisms (potato, basin etc), slang words (chelnochit "comes and brings the goods", stays at the market "sells", packed "well-dresses", a getup "fashionably dressed"). Rhetorical questions are also used for expression: Isn't it impossible to pay people? Where shall we live, what money shall we take to make a

wedding? The expressive introductions are also typical: Oh, the garden is a problem.

Thus, RCSK of the medium generation is built in keeping with general organizational laws of RCS, the impact of native language is shown by the inclusions from the native language (morpheme, word, phraseological units).

2.7 Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyks of younger generation.

Due to the linguistic situation in Kalmykia, the Kalmyk youth assimilates RS before the Kalmyk one, young Kalmyk grow, surrounded by RS from childhood [10]. They assimilate the Kalmyk language fragmentarily: through definite phrases, clauses, words, that they hear at home; they get acquainted with the language system at school. In practice, native language is taught as a foreign one, it is not used for speaking and writing. Young Kalmyk can be considered as Russian-phonetic linguistic personalities with the Kalmyk national character and behavior, determined by cultural traditions.

In RCS, national personality is shown in Kalmyk lexical inclusions, the phonetic, morphological, syntactic interference is not shown. A number of words and expressions, used from the Kalmyk language, come to the formulas of speech etiquette (*mendut* "hello", *hahjanav* "thank you", *buin bolth* "please" etc.), the words, denoting the realias of Kalmyk culture (*hurul* "weather", *borigi* – the name of dish, *chichirdig* – the name of dance etc.), appraisive vocabulary (*azd* "bully", *aiuch* "compliant" etc.). The use of such inclusions to the speech is justified by communicative purposes. Expressivity, laid in national lexeme, is also a reason for their use in RCS. Evidently, the speaker evaluates the word of the native language as more expressive, bright, as compared to Russian equivalent.

In whole, RCS of the Kalmyk youth is in keeping with the common pattern, peculiar of RS in whole. The same as the speech of youth of Russian province, RCSK of the younger generation presents the interaction of bookish, colloquial, slangy and rude words; abusive, swear words are frequently used. Their use is not justified by the speech situation and communicative purposes. In whole, the youth cannot use the linguistic means according to their stylistic coloring and communicative reasonability, there is no stylistic flexibility. The youth knows the system of Russian language quite well, whereas the state of speech culture causes anxiety. As the Russian language plays the increasing role in the life of Kalmyk youth, presenting wide opportunities to get the education, employment in any region of Russia, the purposeful work, aimed at the increase of RS culture, is required.

3. Conclusions

1. Russian language, as a mean of international communication, is underinvestigated. Due to general fall of speech culture, typical of the present times, loosening of standards of KLL, strengthened under the impact of slang words and colloquialisms, and also national languages in contact areas, one the one hand, and conscious desire of speakers for relaxed non-normativity, one the other hand, the significance of cultural-speech investigations increases.
2. The level of Kalmyk's Russian language proficiency depends on subjective factors of the speaker, first of all, on age. The impact of native language is mainly felt in Russian colloquial speech of aged generation. Russian colloquial speech of medium and younger generations complies with general tendencies, typical of Russian colloquial speech in whole. The Kalmyk linguistic personality is shown in lexical inclusions, justified contextually and expressively. A factor of appropriateness, viability of national inclusions shall be taken into consideration in evaluation of Russian speech culture of Non-Russians, as well as the fluctuations of standards of codified literary language in the situation of multilingualism.

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