

THE PROBLEM OF BILINGUISM AND PHONETIC
PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIAN SPOKEN BY THE KAZAKH

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the results of a phonetic analysis of the segmental and suprasegmental characteristics of the Russian language of Kazakh speakers. It shows a general tendency for the variation of standard Russian pronunciation and describes dialect features specific for the inhabitants of South Kazakhstan, North-Central Kazakhstan, West Kazakhstan and East Kazakhstan.

The Russian language of the USSR is not only the national language of the Russian people but it is also a means of international communication. It is taught at schools and institutes of Kazakhstan alongside the mother tongue. The interaction and interpenetration of the two languages, Russian and Kazakh, result in specific features of the bilingualism /1/. From the linguistic point of view the main problem, in terms of bilingualism, is to describe both language systems, state the difference in them and thus predict the probability of interference. And we must bear in mind that the phonetic systems need not represent languages related to, or different from, one another. The degree of genetic kinship of two interfering languages is not the decisive factor for mastering the pronunciation of a foreign language, the most important factor being the peculiarities of phonetic realization of the sound systems of these languages /2/.

The present paper describes the characteristics of the Russian speech of the Kazakh inhabiting the Southern, Western, North-Central and Eastern regions of Kazakhstan. In this connexion, local phonetic features of native speakers should be taken into account. The first results of this kind of research appeared but recently, during the 1950s. New Kazakh linguists produced a number of monographs dealing with the problems of local dialects, dialect vocabularies, questionnaires, subject collections of scientific papers, the first volume of an experimental atlas of the Kazakh language, and

other works. They all register and describe the characteristics of the speech of the inhabitants of a certain region; the boundaries of the expansion of these characteristics are defined and scientifically interpreted. Thus due to the painstaking efforts in gathering the relative data and its detailed description, the Kazakh dialectologists S.Amanzholov and Zh.Doskarayev proved the existence of specific local characteristics in the speech of the Kazakh.

S.Amanzholov describes three main regional dialects in the Kazakh language, and he believes that the North-Eastern dialect is the basis of the modern Kazakh language /3/.

Zh.Doskarayev presents his own point of view based on the phonetic principle and he believes in the existence of two vernaculars: the so-called "Chock" vernacular (S-E) and the "Shock" vernacular (N-W). His classification gives no information on lexical or grammatical characteristics of these vernaculars /4/.

Sh.Sarybayev presents quite a different point of view on the dialect division of the Kazakh language. The research was carried out on all linguistic levels and the results made it possible to distinguish four regional groups of dialects: South, West, North-Central, East /5/. We believe this distinction to be the most convincing one.

The aim of this research, made on the basis of reception analysis, was to describe the phonetic peculiarities in Russian spoken by the Kazakh population in the regions mentioned above. Twenty native Kazakh speakers from each region were involved in the research.

The material of the research is a text prepared at the Laboratory of Experimental Phonetics at Leningrad University, containing 200 most frequent syllables of the Russian language. The text contains about 3000 phonemes in standard transcription. Sound duration is about five minutes.

The text is a story including monologues and dialogues, abounding in all kinds of orthoepic difficulties. For example,

forelingual noise consonants have 538 realizations which fall into three groups: occlusives (279), fricatives (241), affricates (48). The vowels occupied the positions of various degrees of reduction, both quantitative and qualitative. The research was carried out with the help of native speakers from the regions mentioned above. They were teachers, students of the first and the fifth years, and people on the staff at various institutes in these regions. Before they were recorded they had an opportunity to see the text. The recording was done in a specially equipped studio on "a Reporter" tape-recorder at a speed of 19.5 cm/sec.

Every person gave his surname, name and patronimic, the date and place of birth, qualification, profession, place of study or work. The data could be useful for explaining some phonetic peculiarities of the speakers. After the reception analysis of the recorded material the results were divided into two groups: a) the speech of those who have a poor knowledge of Russian, b) the speech of those who have a good or medium knowledge of Russian.

The recordings of 80 people were several times listened to and analysed. In accordance with the aim of the research special attention was paid to the analysis of consonants and vowels according to their differential properties, to the realization of word stress and intonation. Minutes were taken of every recording and all the deviations from standard pronunciation of the Russian language were registered, as well as all extra-linguistic deviations, such as pauses, emotions and hesitation.

The reception analysis of 80 Kazakh speakers showed the following general peculiarities in stressed vocalism: In stressed vowels, 1) Instead of standard /e/ we have a more open /ɛ/ after a palatalised consonant, with the preceding consonant insufficiently palatalised, or non-palatalised. 2) The closed vowel /i/ after non-palatalised consonants gives a more open /ɪ/. 3) The non-uniform /e/ with a narrow u-like beginning and an open end changes into a uniform vowel which is more open than it ought to be. 4) The Russian /ɛ/, which in standard Russian pronunciation comes after a non-palatalised consonant, in the Kazakh speech is front-retracted /ɪ/ with the preceding consonant palatalised. 5) Instead of standard open /e/ after a non-palatalised consonant we get a less open /e/ with the preceding consonant slightly palatalised.

In unstressed vowels, the peculiarities are as follows: I) The unstressed /e/ is used in all positions of the orthographic "e", i.e. there is no alternation of o/a

is an unstressed syllable. 2) Orthographic pronunciation of "a" and "я" replaces the standard literary /ɔ/ /j/ -variants, i.e. there is no alternation of a/ɔ/ in an unstressed position. 3) To pronounce the orthographic "e" in an unstressed syllable a more closed vowel is used with the preceding consonant palatalised, whereas in standard literary pronunciation we have /ɛ/ /ɛ/ /ɛ/ with the first variant preferable; there is no alternation of e/ɛ/ in an unstressed position. 4) The standard literary i/ɪ/ for the orthographic "e" is replaced by /e/, i.e. there is no alternation of e/i. 5) Instead of the standard /ɛ/ /ɛ/ after a non-palatalised consonant (for the orthographic "и" // "и") we get a front-retracted vowel /ɪ/ with the preceding consonant palatalised. 6) To pronounce the orthographic "e" after a palatalised consonant a more open vowel is used, /ɛ/, instead of the standard i/ɪ/, with the preceding consonant insufficiently palatalised. 7) The vowel i/ɪ/ after a palatalised consonant is replaced by a more open /ɪ/ with the preceding consonant insufficiently palatalised. 8) There is a sharp reduction in the post-stressed vowels nearing the "zero" mark in the sound volume. 9) If there are vowels in a word which need different shades of reduction, a Kazakh speaker may pronounce them with one and the same degree of reduction. 10) The interfering influence of synharmonism is observed, i.e. all vowels in a word are assimilated to one another.

The peculiarities of pronouncing Russian consonants by Kazakh speakers are as follows: I) The palatal consonants are not sufficiently palatalised a) before the front vowels, b) at the end of a word after central and back vowels, c) with the consonants /č, š/ invariably non-palatalised. 2) The non-palatalised consonants /š, ž, c/ are palatalised. 3) The sound /j/ is not pronounced in combinations of the type c + j + r. 4) As a rule, the labio-dental fricative consonant /v/ is replaced by the labial-labial /w/. 5) /b/ is mispronounced as /w/. 6) The plosive voiced back lingual /g/ is replaced by the voiced occlusive /ɣ/. 7) There is a weaker plosive in the final consonant. 8) The back lingual voiceless /k/ is replaced by the plosive voiced /g/. 9) A pronounced contiguity of final consonants. The back lingual fricative /x/ is replaced by the uvular-fricative /χ/. 10) The noise occlusives are insufficiently voiced. II) The velarised /t/ is replaced by the apical /t/.

Deviations from standard Russian pronunciation occur in pronouncing combinations of consonants: I) There is no palatalisation of preceding consonants, so that /s/ and /z/ are pronounced as non-palatalised sounds before the pala-

talised /t'/ and /d'/ without any assimilation taking place. 2) Before the noised voiced consonants we get the noise voiceless sound, i.e. there is no assimilation in the volume of voice. 3) There is no replacement of the backlingual occlusive by the corresponding fricative, i.e. a non-standard dissimilation occurs.

Deviations in rhythmical organisation are as follows: 1) The word stress may be misplaced. 2) The number of syllables in a word may be increased due to an extra vowel introduced.

Of this total list of phonetic peculiarities, several characteristics may be ascribed to specific regions: I) In the South Kazakh region, especially in Chimkent district, the voiced occlusive backlingual /g/ is replaced by the voiced fricative uvular /ɣ/, which was not observed in any other region. The final consonants are "less contiguous", which is another specific feature of the Russian language spoken by the Kazakh population in that region. 2) In the East Kazakh region, especially in Semipalatinsk and Taldy-Kurgan, the post-stressed syllables are greatly reduced; the reduction may be either quantitative (even in the 2nd syllable before the stress) or qualitative (even in the 1st syllable before the stress), but not both. 3) In the South and East Kazakh regions, the rhythmical organisation of the Russian language as spoken by Kazakh speakers distinguishes them from those in other Kazakh regions. For example, the words are frequently misstressed. Besides, a) In Chimkent, Kzyl-Orda, Djambul districts, extra vowels are introduced so that the number of the syllables is increased. b) In Taldy-Kurgan and Semipalatinsk districts, the number of the syllables is decreased due to dropping some vowels.

Thus not only the general peculiarities of the Russian speech of the Kazakh but also the peculiarities of the phonetic system of the Russian language as it is spoken in each particular region have been analysed.

The description of various intonation groups is no less important than the description of the segmental characteristics of the Russian language of Kazakh speakers. It is well known that intonation is one of the most important means of carrying information. So it is essential that students should be taught both standard pronunciation and correct intonation. Wrong or distorted intonation makes communication difficult and prevents one from absorbing information. Some linguists, discussing the problem of bilingualism and the interaction of languages, believe that prosodic interference is the most stable, regardless of

the type of bilingualism. I.V. Shcherba introduced the term of syntagm as a minimal sense-group "which is a phonetic unit expressing a sense of unity in speech or thought" /6/. In order to be able to describe the syntagm and define its structure (its melodie, dynamic and temporal contours) it is essential to know the syntagmatic division of the text.

The most universal means of division is a pause. The number of pauses as compared between the model speaker and the Kazakh speakers from different regions characterizes the intonation of the speech. When reading the text for the experiment, the model speaker made 180 pauses while Kazakh speakers, as a rule, made from 220 to 270 pauses. It means that Kazakh speakers make pauses between words rather than between syntagms, and it makes their speech more monotonous and abrupt.

It is also known that "the elements of a syntagm, i.e. words it consists of, may become a unit due to one general stress uniting them and due to their melodie, dynamic and temporal contours" /7/. The aim of the reception analysis of the experimental material has been to describe the prosodic organisation of a syntagm in the speech of the model speaker and Kazakh speakers, respectively. Certain characteristics were taken into account, i.e. the boundaries of a syntagm, the word under syntagmatic stress, the centre of a syntagmatic stress, the direction of fundamental frequency on a syntagmatically stressed vowel and the fundamental frequency in before-stressed and after-stressed elements of a syntagm. Attention was paid to temporal and dynamic characteristics of vowels of a syntagmatically stressed word.

The results of the reception analysis are as follows: I) The intonation of an incomplete speech: The melodie contours of an incomplete syntagm as pronounced by a model speaker may be expressed in different ways, a) by rising melodie contours and b) by falling-rising melodie contours. The Kazakh speakers in the test were using only one intonation, the falling-rising one. In their speech, the direction of fundamental frequency of the syntagmatically stressed word, and of before-stressed and after-stressed elements of a syntagm, is much weaker and more difficult to recognise. 2) The intonation of a complete speech: The model speaker pronounces a complete syntagm with a falling tune, and the fall of the fundamental frequency begins on a syntagmatically stressed vowel and continues on after-stressed syllables. The Kazakh speakers seldom use the falling tune to complete the syntagm.

Very often the falling tune of a syntagmatically stressed vowel is not enough to describe this syntagm as completed; the after-stressed vowels in Kazakh speech are a little longer, there is no falling tone, sometimes we come across a slight rising tone, which makes the syntagm sound incomplete. It is especially common in the spoken Russian of the West Kazakh region. 3) There are two types of interrogative intonation in the text: the intonation of a general question and the intonation of a special question. There are also sentences which are special questions in form but they are used one after another and so the intonation of enumeration is used instead. For Kazakh speakers, the characteristic features of the intonation of a special question are the rising tone on a syntagmatically stressed vowel and the absence of a fall on after-stressed syllables, so the intonation of a special question may be mistaken for the intonation of incompleteness. As to the general question, the melody is also rising, with the tune usually falling over the last word in the sentence. The model speaker uses various interrogative intonations: the centre of a syntagmatic stress both in a special question and in a general question is not necessarily the last word in a syntagm, the syntagmatic stress is often emphasized by a logical stress. The Kazakh speakers seldom if ever use a logical stress. 4) The intonation of emphasis in the experimental text is represented by intonations of address and apposition. The Kazakh speakers use the intonation of address frequently, whereas they use the intonation of apposition extremely rarely. The direction of the tone on a stressed vowel is the same as that used by the model speaker but the dynamic characteristics of a syntagmatically stressed vowel are much weaker. Thus the reception analysis, on prosodic level, of the Russian language spoken by the Kazakh shows the following peculiarities: 1) The intonation of incompleteness is characterized by a falling-rising tone, with a slight rise or no rise on after-stressed syllables. 2) The intonation of completeness is characterized by a falling tone (in the West region, falling rising or rising) on a syntagmatically stressed vowel with longer after-stressed syllables and the absence of a falling tone on them. 3) The interrogative intonation is as follows: The general question is characterized by a rising tone on a syntagmatically stressed vowel and the absence of a falling tone on after-stressed syllables. The special question is characterized by a falling tone on a syntagmatically stressed vowel of the last word in a syntagm. 4) The intonation of address is characterized by a falling-

rising tone with a stronger emphasis on the stressed vowel. A study of segmental prosodic characteristics in the Russian language spoken in Kazakhstan may be of both theoretical and practical value. From the theoretical point of view, it helps to define the standard pronunciation, with dialect and regional variants. From the practical point of view, it may be used to improve the teaching of Russian in non-Russian schools.

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