

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL FACTORS ON URBAN SPEECH

L.V. Ignatkina

Leningrad State University, USSR

ABSTRACT

The influence of social factors (education and profession) on urban speech in twenty cities of Russia is discussed.

One of the important research areas in modern linguistics is the study of the standard variant of a national language and the factors which influence modification of a speech sound.

This problem is closely connected with the study of the development of standard pronunciation, geographical variability and social factors of language phenomena. All those questions may be answered in the best way by the research of urban language. This paper is done in the line of macrosociolinguistics, using P. Bell's definition and it is a part of sociolinguistic research fulfilled in the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany and the USA by the linguists of different countries. The main attention is devoted to the factors of education and profession and their correlation with non-standard dialectal and low-standard language phenomena in the urban speech.

The 3 following problems

are being solved in the paper:

1. fixing correlation between the regional speech features and educational level

2. finding out the influence of the "specialty" factor on persons' speech

3. comparison of the speech features of representatives of different dialect zones (North-, Middle- and South-Russian, of the Ural and Siberia). The research provides additional material for the description of the socio-linguistical influence both on the standard and regional variants and helps to re-examine the functioning and the development of the orthoepic norm. The analysis of the oral urban speech shows the factors of democratization of the Russian standard pronunciation, which is put to life mainly through urban speech in the process of contacting between standard language and other forms of national language (local dialects, popular speech).

The towns and cities observed are situated within (territories of dissemination) of the dialects which have different character and different time of origin. Archangelsk and Vologda are within the zone of functioning of the Northern Russian dialects.

Krasnodar, Kursk, Rostov-on-Don, Ryazan, Simferopol - South-Russian dialects, Volgograd, Nizhny Novgorod (Gorky), Samara (Kuibishev), Pscov, Yaroslavl - Central Russian dialects. Nizhny Tagil, Novo sibirsk, Omsk, Tomsk, Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Perm are included into the Ural-Siberian group. Leningrad, as it is known, doesn't belong to the zone of functioning of any local dialects.

Analysing the speech of people living in these cities we have an opportunity to observe the effect of local dialects and popular speech on the standard language, as well as to find out the correlation between their frequency and the level of education (secondary in complete higher) and also the profession (philologist - or not). The speakers were chosen from the natives of the city, from 18 to 60 years of age, which had secondary or higher education or who were students. The speech of 20-30 people was recorded in each town. In Leningrad 150 people of social and other professions were recorded: 21% (126 people) of the total quantity of the subjects had higher education, 14% (81 people) - secondary education, 65% (381 people) - were students; 232 philologists and 204 - of other professions.

The experimental text was phonetically representative, compiled of 3000 phonemes with regard to the most frequent combinations and positions. The texts were read by the subjects and tape-recorded, then analyzed mainly by ear. The results have shown that in the Leningrad speech there is significant difference between

the phonetic units caused by the level of education. But the speech of the people with higher education is slightly closer to the ideal standard, than that of the people with secondary education.

We may speak about the more stable and more frequent character of the reproductions of popular features only as about a tendency: that is the lack of occlusion during the pronunciation of the affricate /c/, the lack of dissimilation in the consonant cluster in the word /l'ixko/ read as /l'ikko/ in the speech of secondary educated subjects. The frequency of mistake in each case gains 20%.

In the speech of other citizens there is a clear correlation between the frequency of subnormal features of pronunciation and the level of education: the higher the frequency of the popular and dialectal elements is - the looser is the level of education. It's remarkable that in the speech of the South Russian towns citizens not only the popular features are stable, (the same as in the speech of other towns' citizens), but also the dialectal features; for example the pronunciation of the fricative [ɣ] instead of the normally occlusive [g]. In the speech of the subjects from all the towns, except Southern, popular features are 2-3 times more frequent than dialectal ones. The simplification of the final consonant groups such as /s't' - /s'/, /z'n' - /s'/. /pav'erxnas'/. /z'is' / is widely spread everywhere.

In all the cities, except Leningrad, the pronunciation

of students is to a larger extent more orphoepic than the speech of the subjects with secondary and even higher education. It seems to be explainable, by the fact that the students of regional high schools have a stronger desire to speak correctly. Hence, Being the socially progressive group of population, the students of different profession were chosen as the subject of the further research.

The data on the typical deviations from norm are presented in Table. The percentage of philologists and subjects of other professions grouped according to the regions is the following: in the North-Russian cities the philologists comprise 5% from the total quantity of the students, students of other professions - 6%, in Uralo-Siberian cities: 11 and 23% correspondingly, in Middle-Russian cities - 12 and 16%, in South-Russian cities - 10 and 17%.

data the following conclusions can be made:

1. The deviation from norm in the students' speech is the result of the influence of the dialect, in which region the city is situated, and also of popular speech, which is locally not limited. Thereby the frequency of the dialectal features, as a rule, is lower than popular ones, except the case with the South-Russian cities where fricative [ʃ] is pronounced instead of occlusive [g] and [x] instead of [k] in the absolute final position.

2. The reproduction of vowels in all the cities is closer to standard than of the consonants.

3. Popular features, caused in general by casualty and passivness of articulation, are more frequent in the speech of non-philologists. In North-Russian cities the students use popular elements more frequently than in other regions.

4. Dialectal features of

speech of non-philologists.
5. The percentage of the appearance of /e/ in the unstressed position is relatively small inspite its territory wide-spread character, which proves the gradual establishment of national - wide choice of /i/ in this position. Thus we suggest that the further development of the orphoepic standard will draw nearer with the popular elements and will come to the spreading of the pronunciation of affricates, especially /č/ without the occlusive phase and to the simplification of the final combination /s't'/ into /s'/. A gradual penetration of the super-frequent South-Russian dialectal features to the urban speech is also possible.

The variability of pronunciation standard is supported by the dissemination of the popular features.

Summary. The speech of 588 people living in 20 cities of Russia is analyzed according to the weight of popular speech and dialectal factors. The cities comprise 4 groups with one and the same dialect in each group. Popular speech elements prevail in all the cities except the South-Russian ones. Sociolinguistic factors are also discussed: the level of education and the profession. It turned to be that the speech of the students in all the cities except Leningrad is closer to the standard, than that of the people with higher education. Philologists show a more correct speech than the students of other professions.

Cities	Profession	Deviations of pronunciation					
		[e]	[o]	/č/-/s'/	/st'/-[s']	[ʃ]	/k/-/x/
North-Russian	philologists	7	6	22	58	-	-
	others	16	7	26	92	-	-
Uralo-Siberian	philologists	3	3	6	17	-	-
	others	3	4	12	25	-	-
Middle-Russian	philologists	9	-	20	35	-	-
	others	8	-	13	43	-	-
South-Russian	philologists	5	-	11	32	12	45
	others	9	-	10	23	26	52

On the basis of the given pronunsiation are to a larger extent peculiar to the