

Nonstandard use of the “reflexive” postfix -sja in Russian speech of bilingual speakers of Northern Siberia and The Russian Far East

Sociolinguistics

Poster presentation

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One of the features of the oral Russian speech of bilingual speakers of indigenous languages of Russia is the omission / the overuse of the “reflexive” postfix -sja (a postfix with a wide range of uses including reflexive, reciprocal, decausative, passive and some others). The nonstandard use of -sja was mentioned for some contact-influenced varieties of Russian (see Daniel et al. 2010: 82 on Daghestanian Russian, Shagal 2016 on Erzya Russian). It is also attested in some Russian dialects (see Kasatkin 2005: 154). In the talk we will discuss the data on the nonstandard use of -sja in Russian speech of bilingual speakers of Forest Enets, Nganasan and Nenets (> Samoyedic) and Nanai and Ulch (> Tungusic). The data come from the corpus of contact-influenced Russian Speech of the Russian Far East and Northern Siberia which is being created by our team. There is no direct correlate of -sja in any languages under discussion. However, Samoyedic languages have the special reflexive conjugation (Siegl 2013: 256-259 for Forest Enets; Nikolaeva 2014: 224-226 for Nenets; Tereschenko 1979: 193-196 for Nganasan). In Samoyedic Russian some non-standard examples can be explained by the presence of the reflexive conjugation in corresponding Nganasan verbs (1). (1) Davaj ne propadaj-sja ‘Don’t disappear’. In Nanai and Ulch, the closest parallel to the Russian -sja is the decausative / passive suffix -p (cf. Avrorin 1961: 40-41). Some overuses of -sja can be explained by interference with p-derivates, cf. polivajutsja in the modal passive use ‘can be (effectively) watered’ in (2). (2) Oj-oj ... nu prjam... na njom že polivajut-sja ‘Ou, straight on it they’re watered’. Some of the attested omissions of -sja (3)-(4) correspond to unmarked verbs in the source language. (3) Ty dumaeš živoj/ čto li ostal-sja ‘Do you think, that he stayed alive?’ (4) A vmesto nego opjat’ eta vot eta vot povjazka valjaet-sja ‘And instead of it again this bandage is lying’. Nevertheless, some examples do not fit in this nice picture. For instance, the overuse of -sja in Forest Enets example (5) cannot be explained by the presence of a parallel reflexive construction, as stative verbs like ‘dwell’ normally do not bear reflexive suffixes. (5) Byvajut-to\ vot/ oni tam i obitajut-sja/ eto, kormjatsja\ ‘There are... so, they dwell there, feed themselves’. Such an overuse of -sja can be explained by influence of the following standard Russian reflexive verb kormjatsja - ‘feed’. Moreover, the omissions of -sja are attested even in verbs that have reflexive marking in the source language (6). (6) Otec P.\ byl, v armiju\ vzjali, ne vernul-sja... ‘My father P. was, he was taken to the army, he hasn’t return’. The mismatches in standard and non-standard usage cannot be explained by a direct structural copying from L1 to L2. Neither is there a consistent system which differs from standard Russian, since there are much more uses that follow the rules of Standard Russian. In the talk we will propose a more complex context conditioned model to explain the observed facts.