Gender Specific Features in the Speech of Russian Germans in Kirov Region

Olga BAYKOVA¹*, Natalya KRYUKOVA², Andrey KAZAKOV¹ and Zhanna SERZHANOVA³

¹Vyatka State University, 610000, Kirov, Russian Federation
²Tver State University, 170100, Tver, Russian Federation
³Reshetnev Siberian State University of Science and Technology, 660137, Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation

*Corresponding author

Keywords: German Ethnic Community, Gender Differences, Linguistic and Extralinguistic Features.

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of gender differences in the speech of Russian Germans living in the territory of the Kirov region. The relevance of this study is due to the sociolinguistic significance of island dialectology associated with the study of the German ethnic community speech behavior, which exists in isolation from the main ethnic massif. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that it was carried out in the context of gender studies, which complement socio-demographic factors affecting the speech behavior of Russian Germans in the above-mentioned region.

This article discusses the impact of gender on the linguistic competence of the older generation of Russian Germans in the Kirov region on the example of the analyzed stories of eleven respondents, Russian Germans of the first subgroup of the older age group (6 women and 5 men aged 70 to 95 years) on the topic “Deportation of Volga and Ukraine Germans in the Kirov region”. Methods of direct observation, audio speech recording, and also qualitative methods (a content and functional analysis of male and female speech) were adopted to carry out the study.

As a result of the analysis of monologues, it was found out that the speech of each gender group is characterized by its linguistic and extra-linguistic features. Among the linguistic characteristics of men’s and women’s speech, it is necessary to mention, first of all, differences in the grammatical structure. As for extra-linguistic features, these include psychological differences in speech characteristic of a particular gender group, communication style, as well as the goal that men and women pursue when entering into a conversation.

This article will be of interest to researchers involved in studying the characteristics of male and female speech.

1. Introduction

Due to the recent increased interest in the linguistic situation of Russian Germans, the focus of this article is on the linguistic consciousness and cultural identity of the speakers of German island dialects. A particular importance to continue research in this area is explained by the fact that many unexplored dialects have already been lost or are in the process of extinction due to the continued emigration of ethnic Germans.

The relevance and novelty of such studies in the Kirov region is determined by the general linguistic, historical-linguistic, sociolinguistic significance of island dialectology associated with the study of the speech behavior of Russian Germans, with the study of the peculiarities of the development and functioning of their dialects in foreign language environments, that is, in the situation of individual ethnic language groups existence in isolation from the main ethnic massif.
2. Research Methodology

The aim of this work is to study gender differences in the speech of Russian Germans living in the Kirov region. Our gender observations, firstly, supplement the factors of a socio-demographic nature that affect the speech behavior of Russian Germans in the region in question, and secondly, they correlate with general gender studies conducted by domestic scholars [1, 2, 3]. Methods of direct observation, audio speech recording, a content and functional analysis of male and female speech were adopted to carry out the study.

3. Research Results

3.1 On the Issue of Gender Influence as One of the Extralinguistic Factors of Speech Behavior

The problem of “gender and language” has acquired special relevance in recent decades, and the gender aspect of research in Russian linguistics undeniably makes a significant contribution to the comprehension of discourse linguocultural features.

The use of the concept of “gender” as a term of humanitarian knowledge is designed to distinguish between “social gender” and biological sex[2] and allows you to conceptually speak about the language in terms of a dynamic sociocultural construct that accumulates ideas about masculinity and femininity that are characteristic of a particular society in a certain period of time.

Following A.V. Kirilina, the concept of gender is used in this work as "an element of the modern scientific model of man, reflecting the sociocultural aspects of gender, fixed by the language”[1], taking into account its linguistic and cultural specificity, which affects the dynamics of language and gender interaction, which in turn also creates a certain cultural context defined by the parameters of masculinity and femininity in different discourses.

One of the features of gender studies is their applied nature, and, as A.V. Kirilina points out, the gender aspect in linguistics is characterized by the fact that practically any field of linguistics (issues of reference, cognition, morphology, grammar, syntax, lexicology and phraseology, semantics and pragmatics, text linguistics, etc.) can be considered from the point of view of reflection in them gender relations[4]. As a common knowledge, we emphasize the fact that differences in male and female speech can be manifested at all levels of the language, affecting its internal diversity and the appearance of language variants due to gender-related and social-cultural norms.

3.2 The Gender Aspect in the Speech of Russian Germans in the Kirov Region

This paper examines the impact of gender on the linguistic competence of the older generation of Russian Germans in the Kirov region using the analyzed stories of eleven respondents, Russian Germans of the first subgroup of the older age group (6 women and 5 men aged 70 to 95 years) on the topic “Deportation of Volga and Ukraine Germans in the Kirov region”. Hypothetically, it can be assumed that the gender factor should be reflected in the language practice of this linguocultural community of individuals who identify themselves with a particular social group and, accordingly, have a common understanding of the world and common views, fueled by the same social institutions throughout a person’s life. Today it is generally recognized that such parameters of social identity as race, class, ethnicity, as well as profession, status, age, etc., have a significant impact on gender identity, as well as on symbolic images of femininity and masculinity in culture and society, and therefore gender features should be considered in combination with status, social group, level of education, situational context, etc., as well as taking into account the changing situation in society.

It should be noted that in our case, older men and women are bilingual. This was facilitated by their great social activity—work in the “labor army”. At the same time, this age group has retained its native dialects, which they use in everyday life.
Based on the fact that there are no absolute markers of male and female speech, the notions of “typical”, “very typical”, “not typical”, “not very typical” are used in this work when analyzing the speech behavior of German bilinguals.

The analysis has put forward a number of male and female speech features of the older generation of Russian Germans in the Kirov region, due to gender influence as a result of building masculinity and femininity in a specific socio-cultural context.

First of all, when studying linguistic material, it should be noted that female representatives speak their native German dialect much better than male respondents. Women, as a rule, easily make contact by entering into conversation, and, as many scholars note\[1\], communication itself is important for women. Men are much more serious than women regarding both the speech partner and the topic of conversation. Women, in turn, are able to quickly adapt to different conditions of communication and communicate freely, while men are more constrained in choosing a language option and are skeptical of partners involved in a communicative act.

According to our study, the statements of women are often accompanied by all sorts of emotions: crying, sighing, etc.

\[\text{Nu, ich bin hier in die Schule gegangen. Habe sieben Klassen geendet, hier in der Schule, dann war…} \]

\[\text{wir tsvae ... tsvae ... en don Wald gogango. Ondrə arvaaet wa:r khaanə. Nu...} \]

\[\text{wir zwei ... zwei ... in den Wald gegangen. Andre Arbeit war keine. Also…} \]

\[\text{en... Kolxos hat gəarvaat dr bruadr, en da švestr. Nu, en ... en volt. Es wa:rə aox tsvaə...} \]

In Kolchos has worked the brother, and the sister. Also, im... im Wald. Es waren auch zwei...

\[\text{bara:kn en dort habn klept do mennr alaənəc en da fraon alaənəc...} \]

Baracken und dort haben gelebt die Männer allein, und die Frauen allein

[Memories of childhood in the settlement of Chernigovsky, the Kirov region] (This work uses transcribed transcripts of oral speech of Russian Germans deported during the Second World War and now living in the Verkhnekamsky District of the Kirov Region.)

At the same time, the male-informant tells his events calmly, without pronounced emotional means: \[\text{Ich kann mir alles vorstellen. Es kam der Erlas "Wysselenije nemzew Powolshja".} \]

Decree issued on eviction. Well, it was written there ... due to the fact that ...

Ukas wyschel o wyselleni. Nu tam bylo napissano...w swjası s tem, chto...

\[\text{thousands found touzẽ, touzẽ, fpiono`, diversanta`...} \]

obnarusheny tychi tausende, tausende Spionen, Diversanten...

\[\text{əntouzənoinhundrəinonfertsəc vır zen en krasnojarsk gokə:m.} \]
eintausendneunhundertsechzig wir sind in Krasnojarsk eingekommen...

\[\text{on əntouzənoinhundrətsvoifertsəc vır zen en kirof herkə:m...} \]
am eintausendneunhundertzweihundertzvierzig wir sind in Kirov hierherekommen.

\[\text{Hier wurdə` vır bəvaxt, dort vo:r də` komendatur, vır mus geːn on zęc apmęlda`} \]
Hier wurden wir bewacht, dort war die Kommandantur, wir müssen gehen und sich abmelden.

As many researchers note[5], women often in the course of their utterance switch to a topic unrelated to this situation: for example, the female informant talking about the labor army and the fate of their loved ones, suddenly begins a story about how they lived in Ukraine, how they baked biscuits:

*Iç va:*r nur mit mainƏ mama, dr fa:*dr va:*r gesetst. ....An dr Ukraine habn vi:*r...

[Ich war nur mit meiner Mama, der Vater war (fest)gesetzt... In der Ukraine haben wir…

niçt so k 'bakn vi: jetst. Vi:*r bokn ku:xen,pre:niki...

nicht so gebacken wie jetzt. Wir buken Kuchen, Präniiki...]

However, it is worth emphasizing that the woman does not lose her line of conversation, and later returns to the story of deportation. A quick transition from one topic to another is not typical for men.

If a women’s story consists of impressions of what they’ve seen, numerous details, then men build their stories on the basis of facts, without emotional evaluations. Men’s speech is more informative, they often refer to dates, names of decrees, laws. Women’s speech uses more proper names (names of villages, surnames, etc.) in comparison with men’s speeches. Also a typical feature of female speech is repetition and a greater number of pronouns and adjectives:


[Ich kann mir alles vorstellen, alles vorstellen. Dreunddreißig Jahre sind schlechte, schwere Jahre…]

The speech of each gender group, according to O.E. Lomova is characterized by its linguistic and extralinguistic features[6]. Among the linguistic characteristics of the speech of men and women, it is advisable to name, first of all, differences in the grammatical composition (see Table 1).

Table 1. Linguistic Features of Men’s and Women’s Speech Behavior in Respondents’ Stories on the Subject “Memories of the Germans’ Eviction to the Kirov Region”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic features of speech behavior</th>
<th>Men's speech</th>
<th>Women's speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The prevalence of the 1st person singular</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The prevalence of the 1st person plural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A large number of proper names (names of villages, surnames, etc.)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The prevalence of nouns, verbs in speech</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The predominance of adjectives, pronouns</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A large number of repetitions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extralinguistic features include psychological differences in speech, which are characteristic of a particular gender group, communication style, as well as the goal that men and women pursue when entering into a conversation (see Table 2).

Table 2. Extralinguistic Features of Male and Female Speech Behavior in Respondents’ Stories on the Topic “Memories of the Volga Germans’ Eviction to the Kirov Region”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech segments</th>
<th>men</th>
<th>women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Messages about facts, events, phenomena</td>
<td>very typical</td>
<td>typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to laws, documents</td>
<td>typical</td>
<td>not typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of persons, events, phenomena</td>
<td>not typical</td>
<td>typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of a consistent narrative</td>
<td>very typical</td>
<td>not typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of talking about family and friends</td>
<td>not typical</td>
<td>very typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switch from one topic to another</td>
<td>not typical</td>
<td>very typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to the remarks of relatives, friends</td>
<td>not typical</td>
<td>very typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-centeredness</td>
<td>typical</td>
<td>not typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing feelings, emotions</td>
<td>not typical</td>
<td>very typical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a comparative analysis of the speech behavior of bilingual Germans shows, an important feature of male speech behavior is a consistent presentation of events, facts and phenomena, references to laws and documents. For men, an emotional narrative, an assessment of individuals, events and phenomena, diversion to stories about relatives and friends, and also references to remarks from relatives and friends are not typical, they talk more about themselves and, as a rule, talk about what is connected with them.

For female speech behavior, an emotional message about facts and phenomena with a personal assessment of individuals and events is typical. Women often include a description of personal feelings, their own life experiences in the conversation. They are characterized by a discussion of typical female occupations, such as cooking, raising children, talking about relatives. In addition, women often turn to quotes from relatives and friends.

4. Summary

Thus, as a result of the analysis of monologues, it was revealed that a characteristic difference in male and female communication is the ability of women to quickly switch from one topic to another. Men are self-oriented in conversation. It is more difficult for them to monitor the environment. Therefore, unlike women, they cannot talk with two interlocutors at the same time. Women in conversation are not so focused on themselves. They do not strive for leadership, so it is easier for them to switch from priority to parity roles. The man is more immersed in the course of his thoughts and it is more difficult for him to interrupt the conversation. The speech of women often divert from the topic of the conversation, for example, this may be a remark about what is going on at the moment around the interlocutors.

However, such differences cannot be considered indispensable characteristics of the speech of all women or all men; it would be more correct to call them certain gender characteristics of male and female speech.

It should be noted that a large role in speech behavior is played by the social context, as well as the psychological and physiological characteristics of men and women. According to N.I. Formanovskaya, “perception, way of thinking and speech are closely interconnected and differ in men and women. As a result, the same situations are described by them differently, since different accents are placed at the same time”[7]. Taking into account all these factors helps to make the explanation of gender differences in speech behavior more objective.

The analysis showed the influence of gender on the linguistic and cultural status of the bilingual Germans of the Kirov region. This influence, like all linguistic phenomena, is constantly undergoing a modification caused by numerous extralinguistic factors that determine the gender specificity of speech.

References


