



РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫК В МИРОВОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN THE WORLD

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Research article

When your language is disappearing: Canadian Doukhobor Russian

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Abstract. This article considers Russian language attitudes of Canadian Doukhobors, a religious and ethnic minority group of Russian origin who immigrated to Canada in 1899. The significance of the study is determined by a paucity of research devoted to this unique cultural and linguistic group as well as by an urgency of protocolling the language loss. In particular, language attitudes held by the Doukhobors have never been investigated before. The aim of the study is to describe the attitudes of the Doukhobor participants to their heritage language (Russian). The goals are to outline the remaining functions of the language in the community, and the perspectives for its maintenance. The materials include interviews with 40 speakers of Doukhobor Russian who are bilingual in English and Doukhobor Russian. The interviews were recorded in British Columbia and Saskatchewan (the historic settlements of the Doukhobors) between 2012 and 2018. The methods rooted in heritage language and sociolinguistic studies involve manual thematic coding of the interview transcripts and their discourse analysis. The results demonstrate that the speakers are emotionally connected to the Russian language, and that the language is important for Doukhobor prayer services, understanding of their beliefs expressed in Russian psalms, reading Russian literature, travelling to or studying in Russia, etc. At the same time some participants talk about their language as being inferior to Standard Russian, because of anti-dialectal reactions of Russian citizens that they came in contact with. Many Doukhobor participants are skeptical about the possibility of maintaining the Russian language in the group. The results are interpreted in the light of the author's Linguistic Equilibrium theory. In conclusion, the article outlines implications for the heritage language revitalization. The results can contribute to bi/multilingualism theory, heritage language and language loss studies.

Keywords: language attitudes, heritage language, the Russian language, Doukhobor Russian, endangered language maintenance, language loss, Canadian Doukhobors, bilingualism

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Introduction

This study considers sociolinguistic attitudes of Canadian Doukhobors (or Spirit Wrestlers) to the Russian language spoken in the community. The significance of the study is in addressing an understudied minority group and heritage language context which strongly differ from the typical immigrant heritage language contexts with a three-generational shift (Montrul, 2015; Meir et al., 2017). In this way, the article expands the empirical knowledge and theoretical background of heritage language studies.

A better understanding of the language attitudes background requires a summary of some pertinent points of Doukhobor history in Canada. Canadian Doukhobors are descendants of about 7500 immigrants from the Russian Empire who arrived in Canada in 1899 to avoid persecutions for their anti-churchianism and refusal to serve in the army (Tarasoff, 1984). Promised free land that they could toil communally, freedom from military service and non-interference of the government into their internal affairs, the Doukhobors moved to Canada and initially settled on the lands of contemporary Saskatchewan (also in some parts of what is now Manitoba). However, soon after their arrival, the government disregarded earlier promises (of which only exemption from the military service was included in official documents) and started pushing the Doukhobors into private land ownership, which had to be accompanied by swearing the Oath of Allegiance. Both swearing oaths and private land ownership went against the religious beliefs of most Doukhobors (Tarasoff, 1984). Those of them who accepted the private homesteads and swore the oath of allegiance stayed in Saskatchewan, and the rest (about 2/3) were thrown off the land to give way to more desirable settlers of British origin. The Doukhobors who moved to British Columbia purchased some lands there and settled in developing and cultivating the land, planting orchards, building roads, bridges, factories, irrigation, and other infrastructures.

Over the years to follow, as a minority group trying to resist assimilation, Doukhobors in BC suffered from discrimination, which included attempts to dispossess them of privately purchased lands, imprisonment, and forced bankruptcy of Doukhobor communes, which put an end to settlements where Russian was spoken. In early-to-mid-20th century, some Doukhobors in BC refused to send their children to public English schools for fear of militaristic indoctrination, assimilation and loss of cultural roots. The children were forcibly taken away from these parents during regular police raids in Doukhobor villages (mostly of their more radical group known as “The Sons of Freedom”) and placed into a juvenile detention center in New Denver and received English-only education until the age of 15.¹ Many of New Denver survivors still feel traumatized by this experience for

¹ Katz, S. (1957, May 11). The lost children of British Columbia. *Macleans Archive*. Retrieved August 23, 2021, from <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1957/5/11/the-lost-children-of-british-columbia>

which they received no compensation, no apology and no acknowledgement of any wrongdoing by the Federal government.² Two prisons were primarily built for the Doukhobors organizing protests of various forms against the government: the one on Piers Island (off Vancouver island) (Shabani, 2014) and Agassiz Mountain Prison (Woodcock, Avakumovic, 1977). Both in BC and in Saskatchewan, hundreds of Doukhobors were sent to jail for refusing the military drafts during WWI and WWII and the rest became a subject to harassment and bullying from other population groups due to their pacifism (Tarasoff, 1984). Following a demographic decline in the community in the mid-late 20th century, and a change in Doukhobor leadership, the relationship with the government has improved and become amicable since the late 20th century. The examples above demonstrate that being a Doukhobor is associated with a social stigma and a history of discrimination.

Russian is the heritage language of the Doukhobors (i.e., an ancestral language), since it was spoken by the original group of Doukhobor immigrants to Canada (Makarova, 2019b). With minority languages, one of the commonly observed issues is “lack of clarity over language names and boundaries” (Sebba, 2013: 448). Doukhobors originated in the area of central and southern Russia and Eastern Ukraine. Respectively, the original dialectal base was Central and Southern Russian dialects (Tarasoff, 1984). Besides Russian, the languages of ethnicities in the area and spoken by some Doukhobors included Kalmyk, Mordvin, Tatar, Ukrainian, and others. However, over the last 100 years of Doukhobor history in Canada, these other languages were discontinued in the Doukhobor community due to very low numbers of speakers.

In 1802, Doukhobors were exiled into Molochnaya River area of the Russian Empire (nowadays Ukraine) (close to contemporary Melitopol). Their second exile which started in 1841 was in a vast area of Transcaucasia (contemporary Armenia, Georgia and Turkey) (Tarasoff, 1984). Thus, Doukhobor Russian included a few words borrowed from the languages of the people of Transcaucasia, like “burka” (a felted coat, likely borrowed from Persian through Chechen), and “lobia” from Georgian (beans). After Doukhobor immigration to Canada, because of language contact with English, many words were borrowed to account for the new life in Canada, such as “kara” (for “car”), “trustee” (“trustee”), “kabuz” (for “caboose”), and many others. Due to the history described above, the Russian language spoken by the Doukhobors has a number of features differentiating it from Standard Russian vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar (Makarova, 2019a, 2019b; Schaarschmidt, 2012). Therefore, Doukhobor Russian can be considered either as a separate language, which developed from the 19th century Russian dialects in a relative isolation and in contact with English, or as a dialect of Russian. Since the criterion of the difference between languages and dialects of one language is political rather than linguistic, we will describe the language still spoken by elderly Doukhobors as a variety of Russian (DR).

² Kryak, V. (2018, September 9). B.C. government reconsiders apology for Doukhobor children taken from their families in 1950s. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved August 23, 2021, from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-government-reconsiders-apology-for-doukhobor-children-taken-from/>

Doukhobor Russian is critically endangered with only a few hundred elderly speakers left (Makarova, 2019a). There are no young speakers of the variety. However, a few young individuals in the community have a limited knowledge of Standard Russian, which they learnt either at school or from their Russian immigrant mothers.

The aim of this article is to describe the attitudes of Doukhobors to the Russian language. The research goals also involve outlining the functions of the language in the community and language maintenance perspectives as seen by the participants.

The research questions are:

1. What are the attitudes of Doukhobors to Russian?
2. What are the functions of Russian in the Doukhobor community?
3. What are the Doukhobor perspectives on maintaining Russian in the community?

Methods and materials

The methodological framework for the study came from sociolinguistic approaches to heritage language research (e.g., Zhang, Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). The materials of the study include transcripts of 40 semi-structured interviews with Canadian Doukhobor community members (21 women and 19 men) conducted by the author in Saskatchewan and British Columbia between 2012 and 2018. These interviews were selected (from a total of 70 interviews) because they contained answers to questions about the Russian language. The initial purpose of the project was language preservation and description. The average length of the interviews was 45 minutes, and the average age of participants was 78 (ranging from 10 to 96 years old). The interviews were conducted either in Russian or in English depending on the participants' preference. The interviews were semi-structured, which means that not all participants answered all the questions. The responses were manually coded with discourse analysis thematic coding techniques (Waring, 2017). In this paper, the transcripts in DR are provided (in phonetic transliteration, since no transliteration system exists for DR) when the participants spoke in Russian. These excerpts are accompanied by English translation. Examples in English indicate that the participant was talking in English (due to insufficient knowledge of Russian or to code-switches).

The questions about the Russian language in the interviews were as follows:

1. Is the Russian language important for you?
2. Have you tried to pass it over to your children?
3. Do you think that Russian can be maintained in the community?
4. What is the functional role (purpose) of Russian for you?

Results

The results of the responses of 40 Doukhobor participants are summarized in Table.

Out of 36 participants who addressed the question about the importance of Russian for them, 34 participants responded that Russian was important. The reasons for the language importance include emotional connection (23 responses)

and passing the heritage, as their parents (or grandparents) taught them Russian or tried to speak with them in Russian (24 responses). The emotional connotations of the participants included the language being “rodnoj” (kin-beloved, birth language), “loved,” “melodious,” and “beautiful” (examples 1, 2). Two participants said that Russian was not important or not so important, since the message of Doukhobor beliefs takes priority over the language in which it is transmitted (example 3). One of the participants even suggested indirectly that Russian could be abandoned as it limits the spread of the Doukhobor teachings (example 4).

A summary of the participants’ responses to the interview questions (R stands for “Russian”)

Interview questions	Categories of responses	N responses	N total responses	N participants
R importance	emotional connection	23	47	36
	Parents/grandparents taught R	24		36
Passing R	taught R to children	25	38	33
	children spoke no/little R	13		26
R maintenance	regret the loss of RL	20	61	26
	bullying	9		9
	historic significance	2		2
	can be maintained	18		30
	cannot be maintained	12		30
R functions	travel to Russia	7	96	38
	D singing	23		
	family, community	15		
	psalms, beliefs	22		
	studying in R	5		
	economic	3		
	literature	10		
	R TV	5		
R performances	4			
healing (spells)	2			

Example 1

Ruskij, kanešna, mne ruskij samyj ljubimyj.
Of course, I love the Russian language most of all (BC).

Example 2

Nu ruskoj jazyk ta kak že naš... radnoj yazyk (BC).
The Russian language is ours, it is the language of our kin (ancestral/birth) (BC).

Example 3

Ja dumaju što kanešna pa-ruski tiper’ men’šè tiper’ hutarjat’. Bole pašli u školu, pa universitet, rasxodjutsa pa Kanade, pa Amerike, pa suetu. Nu i verim što kada ani pajdut’ nas u suet, ani tožè idut’ raskazyuat’ pra mir, i kak mirna na zime žyt’... i pra bratstua, i družba.

I think that of course they speak Russian less. There are more [young people] who went to school, universities, they spread around Canada, America and the world. But we believe that when they go out into the world, they will also talk about peace, and how to live peacefully on earth, and about brotherhood and friendship (SK).

Example 4

When you no longer understand why you're speaking the Russian language, when you no longer understand the teachings of Doukhoborism because they're only in Russian, then things have to change. We have to widen the sphere, and... I mean, we speak Russian just because the initial Doukhobors were Russian, and it's important, but I don't think it really matters what language we speak. What's important is what we say in that language. And how we treat each other in that language. We need to recognize the strength of the people that have joined our larger family, and we have to welcome it and whatever language they speak (BC).

Out of 33 participants who addressed the question of passing R to their children, 25 indicated that they tried to teach Russian or speak in Russian to their children, or sent them to Russian classes. One of these participants talked about language retention not only by his children, but by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well (example 5). However, 13 participants who tried to teach their children Russian commented that their children spoke none or very little Russian. The reasons of the participants' children inability to speak Russian were leaving home when they were young to study in Vancouver, Victoria, or other places, finding work somewhere else, mixed marriages (to non-Russian speaking partners), lack of opportunities to speak Russian outside the house (example 3).

Example 5

u nas unuk èta žalait', probue na Internet i učja svaix ribjat skol'ki maghët.
Our grandson wants to [learn Russian], he tries on Internet and he teaches his own kids as much as he can (BC).

When asked about Russian language maintenance in the community, the participants' responses split: more than half of them (18) thought the language could be maintained, and 12 participants thought it could not. In connection with language maintenance, and the complexity of issues surrounding it, 9 participants mentioned being bullied at school for not being able to speak English. Two participants pointed out the historic significance of Russian for the Doukhobors. Twenty participants mentioned that the language is spoken less in the community and that they regret the language loss. One of these participants described a clear picture of a generational language shift, but expressed hope that something may happen in future to cause a demand in Russian (example 6).

Example 6

Kada maja mama čitala bibliju, ana čitala pa-ruski. A maja babuška, ana po-ahliski ne znala. A mai deti uyrastut', pastarejut', i umrut', bez ruskaua jazyka. I tak dela pajdët' kak skol'ki mohut znat', da skol'ki uremja. I ne znaju, kada čë esli slučitsa kada što, bude uažna, što im nada znat'.

When my mother read the Bible, she read it in Russian. And my grandmother, she did not know English. And my children will grow up, get old and die without the Russian language. And this is how things will go, who knows

for how long. And I do not know if anything happens sometime that it becomes important for them to know [Russian] (SK).

When describing the purpose and functions of the Russian language for them, most participants indicated the connections of the language with Doukhobor singing (23) and with Doukhobor psalms and beliefs (22), i.e., with the expression of Doukhobor beliefs (example 7). The concept of psalms needs some explanations for a reader unfamiliar with Doukhobor traditions. Doukhobor teachings are compiled in psalms (prayers) that were originally passed down from generation to generation in the oral tradition known as “the Living Book”. In early 20th century the Russian anthropologist Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich compiled transcripts of over 400 psalms in a printed book (Bonch-Bruevich, 1909). Many of these psalms are not only recited but also sung in an ancient specific tradition, whereby each vowel is stretched over a few bars of music notation (Perry, 1992). Psalm singing is believed to be a way of communion with God. However, due to their length and complexity, psalms have been gradually replaced by hymns, a more contemporary song type, which were either created by Doukhobor poets, or shared with other Christian denominations, or came from Russian songs or lyrics (Makarova, 2017). Psalms were also a connection to heritage and family (grandparents), as shown in example 8. Understanding and interpreting psalms was important for participants as well (examples 9 and 10).

Example 7

I speak English most of the time, but to me when I say a prayer, somehow it has more meaning if I say it in Russian (BC).

Example 8

my byli pjat' hadou i my èti pasalmy znali, tady kada deduški predut', i ani xoçut' nas pafalit' što my èta pasalmy znaim, i ja i dosi ix znaju.

We were 5 years old, and we knew these psalms. When grandparents would come, they wanted to praise us for knowing these psalms, and I know them till this day (SK).

Example 9

Nu dlja menja znat' duxaborčeskaj jazyk možna bolee, nu bol'she panimat' duxaborčeskaja učenie i kada my paëm raznye stixi, pasalmy.

For me, it is important to know the DR as much as possible, it helps to understand the Doukhobor teachings better, and when we sing different hymns and psalms (BC).

Example 10

ja ljubljuumatj o psalmah, čevo oni značat', počamu oni značat', čevo ghovorjat', i vot mene eto vdoxnovljaet' ” (BC).

I like thinking about psalms, what they mean, why they mean it, what they convey, and I am inspired by this (BC).

Family and community were named by 15 participants as a function of Russian, most frequent after psalms and singing. An ability to read Russian literature

in the original was a reason to maintain Russian for 10 participants. The participants named their favorite Russian classical authors (such as Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky). One participant specifically pointed out that she liked the classical Russian language of these authors, not the contemporary Russian language (example 11). Two participants showed their familiarity with contemporary Russian literature by mentioning Vladimir Megre's *The Ringing Cedars* series. One participant noted that the simple naturalistic lifestyle promoted in the novels was somewhat similar to Doukhorbor lifestyle principles.

Example 11

Ja ljublju vot jazyk, ruskij jazyk Puškina, Lermantava, daže vot sredi dvacatava veka, i vot posle èta, mne kažeca sportili, a do ètava mne očen' nravica. Ja, djuže ljublju starinnyj (BC).

I love the language, the Russian language of Pushkin, Lermontov, even of the mid-twentieth century, but after that, I think they ruined it, and before that, I love it very much. Yes, I very much love the old one (BC).

For some participants, the reason to maintain or learn Russian was connected with an ability to travel to Russia (7) or to study there (5) (example 12). However, two participants reported being ridiculed in Russia because of the old-fashioned and dialectal language they spoke. One participant mentioned being ridiculed for the same reasons by a Russian resident in Canada. One participant who travelled to Russia was perplexed and somewhat shocked by people identifying him as a Ukrainian (probably due to phonetic similarities between South-Western Russian dialects and Ukrainian plus a few loan words from Ukrainian in DR). By contrast, another participant was quite matter-of-fact telling a story of how a friend with whom her family was staying in Moscow asked them to identify themselves as Ukrainians and not as Canadians for security purposes (not to be targeted by burglars).

Example 12

“Studying in the Russian Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg was a defining time in my development as an artist” (BC).

A few participants were interested in maintaining Russian for watching Russian TV (5) or Russian performances (4). Three participants identified economic reasons for Russian language skills in order to trade or work with Russian partners. One 16-year-old interviewee was making an effort to learn Russian so that he could talk in it to his own children when he has them one day and take them to Russia.

Two participants remembered their grandmothers performing healing spells in Russian, which created a mystical connection with the language and a fascination with certain expressions reflecting Russian worldview (e.g. “mother-wet-earth”) in example 13. The tradition of spells and incantations was described by Inikova in the 1980s (Inikova, 1999). The tradition has been lost since the end of the 20th century and is no longer found among the Doukhorbors.

Example 13

And so she did a chant like that. And she would take water from the stream and she would sprinkle it on me... I do recall the words that she was saying.

...Plus she would say “prosti prosti matj syra zemlja, prosti raba bozhjego.”³ And she would repeat this many times. To this day I remember it means so much to me that you ask mother the moist earth rather than just earth or water (BC).

The researcher did not ask questions specifically about Standard Russian vs Doukhobor Russian, leaving this for the participants to clarify. The results show that some participants are aware of the difference. Four participants asked during the recording sessions whether the researcher wanted them to speak in Standard Russian or Doukhobor Russian. Five more participants mentioned Doukhobor Russian (as opposed to Standard Russian). Of these 9 participants, 3 were somewhat embarrassed that their Russian is “not correct” (example 14), and the other 6 just acknowledged the differences.

Example 14

Ia kaleka v russkom iazyke

I am disabled in the Russian language (BC).

Discussion

The concept of “heritage language” is usually applied to the mother tongue of children in immigrant families who were either brought into a new host country by their parents (1.5 immigrant generation) or were born in the host country (2nd generation) (e.g., Makarova et al., 2017). Heritage languages are acquired by children initially as mother tongues in naturalistic family settings (Montrul, 2015). As these children grew up bi(multi)lingual in the immigrant and host country languages, their proficiency in the immigrant (or heritage) language can widely vary (Polinsky, 2018). However, typically their immigrant mother tongue becomes gradually a weaker language as compared to the dominant host country’s language (Meir, 2018). Another way of looking at a heritage language is through a wider definition: “speakers who have some family, ethnic or emotional connection to a given language” (Polinsky, 2018: 4). Our results demonstrate that both narrow and wide approach are applicable in case of the Doukhobors. Elderly Doukhobors who are highly fluent in Russian acquired it in naturalistic settings in their families and villages. Some younger Doukhobors learnt Russian as a foreign language at school. As compared to the usual three-generational language shift pattern from the immigrant mother tongue to the dominant language of the country (Holmes, 2013), Russian has been maintained among the Doukhobors for over 4 generations.

Language attitudes of its speakers are determined by multiple economic, political, demographic, and social factors (Holmes, 2013; Tran et al., 2021). In situation of language contact, language attitudes reflect the social prestige of the groups speaking these languages and the dynamics of power between them (Holmes, 2013). According to Spolsky (Spolsky, 1969), these attitudes are also influenced by language practices, language ideologies, and language management, which applies to

³ “forgive, forgive, Mother Wet Earth, forgive God’s serf...”

home and societal levels. Attitudes of heritage language speakers to their language have been well investigated among the first and second generation immigrants in English-dominant countries, who speak a variety of heritage languages, such as Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese and others (e.g., Tran et al., 2021; Makarova et al., 2017; Zhang, Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). These studies demonstrate overall positive attitudes of the immigrant parents towards maintaining their home languages and passing them over to their children. On the other hand, even though competences in heritage language may vary, and the language may have low instrumental value, speakers of heritage languages (the second and subsequent generations of immigrants) tend to have more positive attitudes toward the heritage language than the dominant language (Rubino, 2021). At the same time, heritage language speakers often have insecurities in communicating in the heritage language (Tseng, 2021). We found both a desire to maintain the language and uncertainty in the status of Doukhobor Russian as well as the participants' regrets about the language loss and inability to fully pass the language over to their children.

The probability of a minority language to be passed over to next generations is often described as “ethnolinguistic vitality”, the major components of which are “status (including access to political power, social status, history and status of the community language), demography (size of the group, ...density, area, birth rate and patterns of migration), and institutional support (within mass media, education and other social institutions)” (Sebba, 2013: 457). In terms of the language variety status, the results of the study as well as Doukhobor history in Canada suggest that as compared to English (as well as Standard Russian), Doukhobor Russian is a low (“L”) variety, employing Ferguson’s (Ferguson, 1959, 1991; Fishman, 1967) distinction between “L” (low) and “H” (high) varieties in diglossia. Doukhobor variety of Russian is spoken in family and with some Doukhobor friends on occasion (as a typical L variety). By contrast, unlike a typical “L” variety, it is also used for religious purposes: to recite psalms, sing psalms and hymns and for some limited communication at Doukhobor prayer meetings. While it enjoys some historic value and has a strong emotional attachment among elderly Doukhobors still speaking the language, there is no association with power or higher social status. It appears quite remarkable that most Doukhobor participants have maintained a positive attitude to the Russian language and would like to see it functioning despite being subjected for generations to “linguistic racism,” i.e. ideology of linguistic homogeneity, discrimination, and alienation (Dovchin, 2019: 334). On the other hand, many other individuals outside of the scope of this investigation preferred to assimilate, changed their names and avoid any contact with Doukhobors (Kalmakoff, 2020).

The relative longevity of Doukhobor Russian is likely explained by its role in Doukhobor beliefs and *sobraniia/moleniia* (prayer service) meetings. Many participants wish that Russian could be preserved but do not see ways of accomplishing it. In addition to the well-known description of minority and heritage languages as “problem, right, or resource” (Nguyen, Hamid, 2018), Doukhobor Russian evidence seems to provide yet another option: language as a regret.

Language tends to be symbolic and have crucial value for identities of ethnic and religious minorities, as proven by Hebrew and other religious/ethnic groups;

the language of rituals is closely connected with the culture of its speakers (Keane, 2004). Interestingly, there were only three participants with limited or no Russian language skills who suggested that translating the psalms and other Doukhor texts into English could be a solution, since these participants could not understand the semantic complexity of the ritual texts that are impossible to be translated into another language without a very significant loss of meaning.

The demographic situation in the Doukhor community is not favourable for the language retention for a few reasons identified in our earlier research and confirmed in this article. These reasons include a very small population size, an increased exodus of the younger generation from the rural areas in SK and BC to cities and other provinces, and intermarriages (Makarova, 2019b). As some participants mentioned, when they were growing up, in place of destroyed Doukhor communes, there still were Doukhor villages, where they had relatives and other Russian-speaking neighbours and had many cultural activities (example 15). However, the situation changed, and there are no areas of compact settlements of Doukhobors in Canada. While a few towns still have a few Doukhor families residing there, these families are dispersed in the areas (e.g., Saskatoon in SK, Castlegar, Nelson and Grand Forks in BC).

Example 15

Komunal'naj zhizn' konchilas', no sely ostalis'. I mne očen' horošo bylo žit' u etaj sele, tam babuška i deduška i mama i papa, a na drughom boku drughije familia žili, moja tjoťja... My hodili na sobranija, Čistjakov sozdal raznyje gruppy – dramatičeskaja, literaturnaja. Očen' interesno bylo, potomu što my učilis'. Bylo mnogho talantlivyx ljudej, kotorye predstavljali skits. A posle soveršilos' russki školy večernie. Po voskresenjam byli molitvennye sobranija.

The communal life was over, but the villages remained. And it was so wonderful to live in that village, there was grandmother and grandfather, and mother and father, and on the other side, there were other families and my aunt. We attended the meetings, Chistjakov created different groups – drama, literature. It was very interesting, because we were learning a lot. There were many talented people who performed skits. And then there were Russian evening schools organized. On Sundays, there were prayer services.

There is very little institutional support for the language, as the Russian classes are closed in BC elementary schools, and only one bilingual school remains in the province (with limited hours of Russian education). Russian is no longer taught at the high school level, but is taught as a foreign language in the UBC and University of Victoria (Makarova, 2019b). Current Doukhor leadership is making efforts to maintain Russian in the community. Conservation of DR appears perhaps less pressing than passing over any form of Russian (de facto Standard Russian). A kindergarden with limited Russian language education is run by the USCC (Union of the Spiritual Communities of Christ, a major Doukhor organization in Canada where Standard Russian is taught by a Standard Russian instructor). The “Iskra: Voice of the Doukhobors” journal of the USCC publishes some texts in Russian and bilingual texts in Russian and English, although most of

the text is in English. The Russian texts in the journal are for most part in Standard Russian, but some articles present interesting words and expressions from Doukhor Russian. The USCC Executive Director makes his speeches and addresses bilingual (in Russian and English).

A disappearance of a local variety is not in any way unique. As it dies, it may sometimes shift to a standard variety. For example, a shift from dialect to a standard language variety of a heritage language has been observed for other immigrant groups as well, such as Italo-Australians (Rubino, 2021). In Italo-Australian context maintenance of the High language (Standard Italian as opposed to dialect) is more plausible, since it relies on the multiple support factors (Rubino, 2021). By analogy, Russian is more likely to survive in the Doukhor group as Standard Russian, if the Doukhobors continue to exist as a distinct group.

According to the author's "Linguistic Equilibrium" theory (developed originally for typical contemporary immigration contexts), the language maintenance depends on a wide range of social, ideological, demographic, political factors and on the wills and actions of local communities to balance language use based on their needs. These can include re-establishing a heritage language in their own use, teaching it to children and in community groups. However, it takes considerable energy from communities and individuals to reverse a language shift.

The results of the study have certain limitations. First, they may be skewed towards more positive representations of Russian because the original purpose of the project was Doukhor Russian documentation. Therefore, the author initially was trying to recruit participants who could speak Russian. This recruitment strategy also limited the participants by age, as most participants were elderly, and only 3 participants were in the young age group 10–16.

Conclusion

Language is 'the soul of a nation, the supreme manifestation of its cultural identity, the foundation of its true spiritual life' (Brown, 2013: 247). Doukhor Russian is a strongly endangered variety on the brink of extinction. Its strongest domain is Doukhor religion and way of life, its connection with Doukhor beliefs through psalms and hymns. Its speakers have a strong emotional connection with it, but do not see ways of encouraging younger generation to maintain it. The ethnolinguistic prognosis for the variety maintenance is negative due to demographic, status, and institutional factors. If the community remains strong over the next few decades and undertakes continuous measures towards language retention, it is possible to expect a shift from Doukhor Russian to Standard Russian. Some words and expressions from Doukhor Russian could remain for symbolic purposes as signs of group belonging and kinship.

The results of the study could hopefully be applied in developing Russian language courses for the Doukhor community. The recommendations are to plan such courses as hybrid (Standard Russian with elements of Doukhor Russian) and multicultural (i.e., representing Doukhor Russian and Russian languages and cultures) following multicultural approaches to language learning (Delanoy, Volkmann, 2006; Freitag-Hild, 2018; Sandkühler, Lim, 2004).

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Научная статья

Когда твой язык исчезает: канадский духоборческий русский

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Аннотация. Рассматривается отношение канадских духоборцев (духоборов) к русскому языку. Канадские духоборцы, иммигрировавшие в Канаду в 1899 г., представляют собой религиозное и этническое меньшинство русского происхождения. Актуальность работы обусловлена недостаточностью исследований этой уникальной культурно-лингвистической группы, а также возможностью описания динамики утраты языка. Это первое исследование, посвященное языковым отношениям среди духоборцев. Его цель состоит в описании отношения духоборческих информантов к русскому языку их наследия. В задачи исследования входит описание сохранившихся функций языка в общине и перспектив его сохранения. Материалы исследования составляют интервью с 40 но-

сителями духоворческого русского языка, англо-русскими билингвами. Интервью были записаны в Британской Колумбии и Саскачеване (исторических провинциях проживания духоворцев) с 2012 по 2018 г. Методология, основанная на исследованиях в областях языков наследия и социолингвистики, включает дискурсивный анализ тематически кодированных транскриптов интервью. Результаты исследования показывают, что носители языка эмоционально привязаны к нему и русский язык важен для духоворческих молений, отражения верований в псалмах, чтения русской литературы, поездок и обучения в России и т. д. С другой стороны, некоторые носители полагают, что их язык ниже по статусу, чем стандартный русский, из-за антидиалектных реакций русских граждан, с которыми они состояли в контакте. Многие информанты скептически относятся к возможности возрождения языка в общине. Результаты обсуждаются в свете авторской теории лингвистического эквilibrium. В завершение обозначено возможное применение результатов для возрождения языка. Перспективы исследования состоят в их применении в теориях билингвизма и мультилингвизма, языков наследия и описаниях утраты языков.

Ключевые слова: отношение к языкам, язык наследия, русский, духоворческий русский язык, сохранение исчезающего языка, исчезновение языка, канадские духоворцы, двуязычие

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