

Features of Language Interference in the Process of Learning Chinese as a Second Foreign Language in Russia*

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Abstract—The article deals with a problem of a language interference in the process of learning foreign languages with the stress on Chinese language by Russian-speaking students. The author is using his own experience in the course of studying this problem and makes an attempt to show the roots of the problem and some ways to solve it.

Keywords—language interference; the Chinese language; the Russian language; students; education; bilingualism; foreign language

I. INTRODUCTION

The language policy of China today is aimed at the spread of Chinese not only within the country due to the strengthening of China's position in the world since the beginning of the 2000s. The number of people who learn Chinese as a foreign language has increased in the world. According to the official statistics of the State Chancellery for the dissemination of Chinese abroad by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (Zhōngguó guójiā hànyǔ guójì tuīguǎng lǐngdǎo xiǎozǔ 中国国家汉语国际推广领导小组 (or shortly H àn b àn 汉办 or Guójiā hàn b àn 国家汉办), established in 1984 under the government of the PRC, there are more than 40 million people studying Chinese in the world.

China pays special attention to the spread of the Chinese language in Russia as a country with which it has a common border, and a long history of mutual relations, as well as plans and prospects for further deepening of cooperation and interaction in various fields.

Russia needs to increase the number of young professionals with a decent level of education, which, of course, includes foreign language skills, and interest in Chinese has been growing a geometric progression in recent years.

Today, Chinese is needed both for further education in China, which is becoming increasingly fashionable and in demand among young Russians, as well as during educational and scientific internships, working in Russia and in China, for doing business and trading and for various

other purposes.

For a more successful study of the Chinese language in Russia, a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of language interference is necessary. Regardless of the level of education, skills, experience in learning other foreign languages, above all, English, learning Chinese, mainly in the initial stages of studying, face various problems.

This article discusses one of the most characteristic problems in the study of foreign languages, in this case of the Chinese language, that is the problem of language interference, which can happen both in the process of learning a single language or in several foreign languages.

II. LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE DEFINITION

Learners of a foreign language, even with a good command of a foreign language, often make mistakes caused by interlingual interference — the influence of the mother tongue system on a foreign language, and subsequently, during prolonged immersion into the language, the language being studied begins to influence the native language. A person who learns a foreign language rarely avoids collisions with the phenomenon of linguistic interference. This phenomenon happens as a result of the influence of one language on another. Usually, the native language influences a foreign language, but at an advanced stage of study it happens and vice versa. Interference can manifest itself in both oral and written language, as well as at all language levels.

The term interference was first used in the exact sciences, where it means interaction, interaction, the result of which can be both positive and negative. In linguistics, it was first introduced by scholars of the Prague Linguistic Circle, implying an interference process as a deviation from the norm of contacting languages. U. Weinreich calls the interference deviations from the norms of any language resulting from the possession of two or more languages, i.e. due to language contact. According to E. Haugen, interference is a case of deviation from the norms of the language, appearing in the speech of bilingual speakers as a result of acquaintance with other languages. A. Klimov believes that interference is the result of the imposition of

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two systems in the process of speech. N.B. Mechkovskaya calls the mistakes in speech in a foreign language caused by the influence of the mother tongue system as interference. [4]

Another definition proposed by V.A. Vinogradov, is formulated as follows: "Interference is the interaction of language systems in a bilingual environment that develops either during a language contact or when an assimilation of a non-native language is individual", deviations from the norm and non-native language system caused by the influence of the native language. [2]

Interference occurs with regular use of different languages by the same person. The condition for the emergence of linguistic interference is linguistic contact, that is, "verbal communication between two linguistic groups," or, when teaching students, a learning situation. Students of language departments, even with a good command of a foreign language, often make mistakes caused by interlingual interference. There is a certain influence of the system of the native language on a foreign language, and subsequently, during a prolonged "immersion" in the language, the language being studied begins to influence the native language.

A speaker equates the units of one language with the units of another because of their similarity in form, distribution, or both. The depth and amount of interference may be different. They depend on many subjective and objective factors. It is believed that the smaller the typological distance between the native and the studied languages, the greater the degree of their similarity and the smaller the difference, the greater the likelihood of interference. If this distance is large, that is, languages are genetically unrelated, then there will be fewer cases of automatic transfer, and, as a result, less mistakes made by students. However, there are exceptions.

The situation of language contact leads to the emergence of bilingualism, the possession of two or more languages and their use depending on the conditions of verbal communication. Since the students' speech is not yet perfect, the "reliance" on the native language in the process of communication is inevitable to some extent, which ultimately leads to violations of the system and norms of the second language, the emergence of the so-called interference. The primary system is considered as a source of interference, the secondary - as an object of interference. The primary system can also be represented by a previously learned non-native language, when the features of a previously learned foreign language in which a person's speech activity was carried out are transferred to a newly studied language, thus distortion occurs under the simultaneous influence of the native language system and other previously studied languages.

Great attention to the problems of bilingualism in the linguistic aspect was given by the outstanding Russian linguist N.S. Trubetskoy. He wrote that, while listening to someone else's speech, we, when analyzing what was heard, involuntarily use our usual "phonological sieve" of the native language. And since our "sieve" is not suitable for a foreign language, numerous errors and misunderstandings arise. The

sounds of a foreign language also receive from us a wrong phonological interpretation. N.S. Trubetskoy believed that a foreign accent does not depend on the fact that a foreigner cannot utter one or another sound, but on the fact that he "incorrectly judges this sound", which is caused by the difference between the phonological systems of a foreign and native language. [5] S.I. Bernstein identified the main reason for the difficulties in mastering foreign language pronunciation in that students perceive someone else's speech through the prism of the phonetic system of the native language. Possessing sustained skills in listening and speaking the sounds of the native language, they use these templates when they perceive and reproduce the unusual sounds of foreign speech. It is not by chance that, at the initial stage of training, the students represent sounds of the native language instead of foreign sounds. The nature of the interaction of sound systems in teaching a non-native language has its own specific features. [1]

III. THE PROBLEM OF INTERFERENCE IN LEARNING CHINESE

The problem of interference in learning Chinese has its own characteristics. When teaching students foreign languages, sound interference can be interpreted as "bad" and "mediocre" pronunciation in the language being studied. In this case, there is no interaction between the two language systems - the "speech" of students' sounds mainly in the classroom. In order to achieve good pronunciation in a foreign language, the teacher primarily pursues general linguistic goals, since mastering the mechanisms of sounding speech is the key to mastering all the riches of a foreign language. In the conditions of interference, the "poor" quality of speech in a non-native language does not preclude a good understanding, and if the sounds of a non-native language are poorly distinguished, pronunciation errors are not necessary. When teaching students foreign languages, in particular, Chinese, the "Russian accent" especially "betrays" the speaker. At the same time, errors in the arrangement of the phrasal stress, in the choice of intonation center in the phrase, the appearance of "tracing paper", that is, the literal translation from Russian, are very obvious.

A particular problem for everyone learning Chinese, including Russian-speaking students, is tones, that is, certain increases or decreases in the pitch of the voice during the pronouncing of certain syllables that perform the same distinctive function as the sounds themselves. Unlike Chinese, there is no notion of tone in Russian. However, every single word has its emphasis. The stressed syllable is distinguished by intonation and sounds more drawn in comparison with other syllables of the phonetic word. In Chinese, there is no emphasis as such; there are only phonetic positions in which the tone is realized most clearly; all syllables that make up a word are pronounced for approximately the same time intervals. For Russian-speaking students, mastering tones is a great difficulty and often attempts are made to replace tone with the stress that exists in Russian.

Errors in the pronunciation of individual sounds can be caused by a number of reasons. The most common is the

lack of a specific Chinese language sound in Russian with the presence of a similar articulation and / or sound; that is why the sound of the Chinese language is replaced by the sound of the Russian language. For example, Chinese consonants [s], [p], [t] (for example, in the words 草 cǎo - “grass”, 旁 páng - “near”, “near by”, 天 tiān - “sky”), etc., are similar to Russians [ts], [p] and [t] respectively, however, unlike from Russian sounds, they are aspirated. The Chinese sound [ch] (for example, in the word 陈 chén - the surname Chen) differs from Russian [h] not only by the presence of aspiration, but also by the fact that Chinese [ch] is hard, while Russian [ch] is soft. The Chinese vowel [i] is generally similar to Russian [i], however, differs from it in the form that it does not soften the previous consonant and is pronounced more intensely. Due to the unusual nature of this phenomenon, Russian-speaking students often have involuntary attempts to soften the initial. Most often, this error occurs when pronouncing a combination of solid sound [d] with [i], for example, in the words 地 (dì - “earth”), 电 (diàn - “electricity”), 叮 (dīng - “sting”, “bite”), etc. However, the softening [d] in this case leads to the fact that it is pronounced indistinctly and sounds like the sound [j] (for example, in the word 几 jǐ - “several”), which is an error.

The second category of reasons is the complete absence in Russian of some sounds that exist in Chinese. This phenomenon applies to both consonant sounds, for example [r], [n] and [ŋ], as well as some vowels, for example, the sound [ü]. The approximant [r] (for example, in the word 人 rén is “person”), mistaken for Russian trembling [r] due to the character used in the Chinese pinyin transcription system, actually pronounced as something between a [ayr] combination and a sound [zh].

Nasal occlusive consonants [n] and [ŋ] (for example, in such words as 寒 hán - “cold”, “frosty” and 行 háng - “row”, “string”, “office”; 晚 wǎn - “evening”, “Night” and 网 wǎng - “network”) cause difficulties for Russian-speaking students due to the absence of the sound [ŋ] in Russian, as well as some similarities in the sound of both of the sounds. As a result of the inability to clearly pronounce these sounds, as well as to distinguish them by ear, students can often pronounce different words in the same way or confuse them when they hear speech by ear, most often this happens when the words have the same tones. The vowel [ü] causes difficulties for Russian-speaking students in pronouncing syllables with a zero initial (for example, in such words as 鱼 yú - “fish”, 曰 yuē - “speak”, “utter”, etc.), because the sound [ü] is not found in the Russian language in an isolated position, but is found only in combinations with soft consonants. As a result of the strangeness of the articulation of this sound, Russian-speaking students often mistook the usual combination of [yu] sounds instead. [3, pp. 43-48]

Interference is observed in the assimilation of linguistic forms of various levels (sounds, words, sentences) and its degree depends on the degree of similarity of linguistic forms, if the linguistic forms are similar, then interference is easily overcome. Interference is easily overcome with complete divergence of linguistic forms. The greatest difficulties in overcoming interference are observed in those cases. When the phenomena collide partially similar. In this

case, the opposition of one language is replaced by the corresponding opposition of another language.

Such phenomena include syntactic level phenomena, that is, interference in the construction of a sentence. It is especially difficult to overcome the interference with the assimilation of the rules of the arrangement of words in the sentence of a foreign language.

The grammatical interference also causes problems for Chinese learners, because of the different order of the word in the Chinese sentence.

A distinctive feature of the Russian language is a fairly free word order in the sentence. For example, the following word-order are possible: “Tomorrow I will do homework with a friend after class”, “I will do my homework after class with a friend”, “I will do homework with a friend after class tomorrow” and other options when words are arranged in such a way as they say, which does not affect the grammar of the sentence, but only slightly shifts the accents of what has been said. Proceeding from this, Russian-speaking students in the course of the influence of language interference try to build a Chinese sentence, focusing on how it sounds in Russian, putting words in roughly the same order and forgetting that the grammar of Mandarin contains a rather strict approach to the word order in the sentence. This sentence should be translated as follows: 明天我跟朋友在家做功课 Míngtiān wǒ gēn péngyǒu zàijiā zuò gōngkè. Acceptable options for rebuilding this sentence allow you to swap the time and subject. It is unacceptable, as it is possible in Russian, to say: 做功课我在家跟朋友明天 Zuò gōngkè wǒ zàijiā gēn péngyǒu míngtiān.

Or, for example, the words 以前 yǐqián “before”, 以后 yǐhòu “after” and their variants in Russian should appear before the word to which they refer, but in Chinese they go after: 下班以后 Xiàbān yǐhòu “after work”, 吃饭以前 Chīfàn yǐqián “before eating”, which causes difficulties for students.

The grammar features of two languages often lead to errors in the use of prepositions. For example, learning Chinese Russian-speaking students often use the preposition of the direction “in, on” 在 zài as is customary in Russian, to enter the supplement direction: 我去在北京 Wǒ qù zài Běijīng “I’m going to Beijing”, 他来在学校 Tā lái zài xuéxiào “He will come to school”, 她到在机场了 Tā dào zài jīchǎng le “She arrived at the airport”.

A lot of difficulties are caused by the use of the preposition 给 gěi and other prepositions, which is associated with changes in cases in the Russian language and the lack of such in Chinese. It is not always clear to students why sometimes the preposition 给 gěi is needed, sometimes not, because in Russian in all cases there is a change in indirect addition to the dative case. 我给家人写信 Wǒ gěi jiārén xiě xìn “I am writing a letter home”, 我给你介绍一下 Wǒ gěi nǐ jièshào yīxià “I will tell you, I will present something / someone”, 我送你一本书 Wǒ sòng nǐ yī běn shū “I give you a book”, 我还你钱 Wǒ huán nǐ qián “I give you back money”.

Seeing the dative case in Russian, students tend to use the preposition 给 gěi everywhere, although the Mandarin grammar teaches that it is not required everywhere.

The lexical interference associated with the specifics of using some Chinese words is also a frequent occurrence, which is very different from their counterparts in Russian. For example, "Go home" is passed with the verb 去 qù "go" ("After the lessons I will go home" 下课以后我去家 Xiàkè yǐhòu wǒ qù jiā) and not with the verb 回 huí (which already contains the concept of "return home" 下课以后我回家 Xiàkè yǐhòu wǒ huí jiā).

There is, for example, the interference of Chinese and English. For example, Russian-speakers, studying simultaneously these two languages, often confuse the pronunciation of certain sounds. Thus, the phonetic unit of the Chinese language "q" /q/ (qi) is often pronounced as is customary in English, that is /kju/.

And, for example, instead of the English soft-pronounced "she" (she), the firmly-pronounced sound "shi" is pronounced, as is customary in Chinese.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the problem of linguistic interference is always associated with linguistic structure. It represents a peculiar response of the linguistic structure to the linguistic element penetrated into it. This determines the need to study the problem of interference, especially in linguistic terms.

Analyzing the speech of people learning a foreign language and, thus, speaking in some measure in two languages, we are confronted with phenomena of interference. Mastering a foreign language system, a student often draws analogies, comparisons with his native language, determining similarities or discrepancies with similar phenomena in another. Under certain conditions, this association can help it transfer phenomena from one language to another, but it can also interfere.

Overcoming or reducing language interference in teaching students a foreign language is very difficult, but using authentic teaching materials, audio media, newspapers, magazines, etc., as well as proper organization of the educational process, contributing to "immersion in the language", as well as teaching students work on the features of the language being studied leads to its significant reduction. One of the main ways to combat interference in Chinese is to communicate with native speakers, as well as watching movies and listening to music in Chinese.

Interference is overcome as the norms of a foreign language are mastered. The efforts of the teacher should be directed towards a more rapid overcoming of the intervention of the systems of the mother tongue in the system of another's. A teacher can deal with interference only if he is well aware of the norms of the native language of his students, taking into account when it is necessary to dissociate himself from his native language and when to rely on it. This will help avoid false interference. In addition, students need to pay attention to the fixed versions of a foreign language.

In general, in contrast to the problem of "tracing", that is, the blind transfer of language models from a native language to a foreign language, the problem of language interference is more typical of those who begin to learn a language. If, however, this problem is addressed and progressively improved languages, then the interference can be overcome after a certain time, which is in direct correlation with the intensity and prolongation of the study, the efforts of the student himself, his ability to absorb a foreign language, memorize original patterns and practice the development of a linguistic sense.

Thus, we can talk about the problem of linguistic interference in learning Chinese as an interesting experience manifested in certain mistakes and allowing learners to better understand both the language they are learning and their native language, making interesting analogies and observing the differences between Chinese and Russian. language, and often between the three languages: Chinese, Russian and English.

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