

ENGLISH AND SLOVAK LANGUAGE SYSTEMS IN CONTACT: SUPRASEGMENTAL LEVEL

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INTRODUCTION

Current state of formation of national and territorial variants of English, known as New Englishes and World Englishes, is caused by the phenomenon of globalization of English in the world¹. Each of these variants forms a social and communicative system designed to provide communication of its speakers². The term "*non-English speakers*" defines the category of the speakers who speak and use English but their native language is the other.

The need for the term "*non-English speakers*" is due to the emergence of *New Englishes (World Englishes)*, and is proved by the existence in modern linguistics the terms *Native speakers (NS)* and *Non-native speakers (NNS)*³.

Considering the typology of English language variants, the researcher B. Kachru proposed a classification of the variants and the idea of globe separation into three regions of English proficiency ("*Kachru Circles*"). The first circle, called the Inner circle, includes the countries where English is the native language; the second circle (Outer or Extended circle) includes those countries where English is the second language; third circle (Expanded circle) comprises the countries where English is spoken as a foreign language. B. Kachru suggests that boundaries between these circles are constantly changing in the direction of increasing due to the influence of the English language.

A broader perspective has been adopted by D. Crystal, who used in his works a similar scheme to describe the languages and language processes that take place. It is quite natural that the newly created English versions retain the features of the British and American variants, however, each of them has its own cultural and linguistic features.

¹ Kang O. Learners' perceptions toward pronunciation instruction in three circles of World Englishes. TESOL Journal. 2015. Vol. 6(1). P. 59–80. doi: 10.1002/tesj.146, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tesj.146>.

² Kachru B. Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism : the English Language in the Outer Circle. English in the World. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 11–34.

³ Toivanen J. Tone of Choice in the English Intonation of Proficient Non-native Speakers. Phonum. 2003. Vol. 9. P. 165–168.

The expansion tendency circle covers English as a foreign language for intercultural communication of representatives of different ethnicities, for example, *Spanglish* – Spanish English, *Ukrainglish* – Ukrainian English, *Runglish* – Russian English, *Polglish* – Polish English, *Chenglish* – Czech English, *Chinglish* – Chinese English, *Japtish* – Japanese English, *Slovglish* – Slovak English, etc.

In the same vein, Esther Low suggests a slightly different pattern of distribution of these circles: the contours of the "outer circle" interact with the contours of the "expanding circle", thus reflecting the probability of linguistic contacts between the speakers of the respective circles in the process of intercultural communication⁴.

Drawing on an extensive range of sources, the authors set out the different ways in which they note that circles' formation is different from the development of postcolonial English, that is, an "external" circle, since English in Europe functions as a means of communication⁵. Being fluent in English, Europeans do not identify themselves with the English-speaking culture that countries from the "outer" circle aspire to. Overall, these cases support the view that, English in Europe is not a matter of prestige, but convenient, due to its versatility, tool of international communication.

One of the most up-to-date theories that reflects language contacts is considered to be so-called "networking" developed by E. Thomas⁶. According to the theory, the language tree has many branches, and it reflects the presence of multiple horizontal links between different language variants, which facilitates the transfer of language features and phonetic interference between language variants at different stages of its development. Considering all the difficulties of multilateral contacts, which have resulted in the emergence of new national-English variants of the English language, a network scheme containing a description of the individual variants and their interaction seems to be the most thorough.

It is important to note that one of the relatively recent English language versions is rightly considered to be Euro-English or European English language version. Particularly, scientists' attention is drawn to Euro speak or European Lingua Franca, ELF (European Lingua franca) and its unique characteristics⁷. The debate has gained fresh prominence with many

⁴ Low E. L. The Acoustic reality of the Kachruvian Circles. *World Englishes*. 2012. Vol. 29(3). P. 394–405.

⁵ Hall G., Cook G. The English language needs and priorities of young adults in the European Union: student and teacher perceptions. *ELT Research Papers* 15.01. British Council, 2015. 65 p.

⁶ Thomas E. *Sociophonetics. An Introduction*. Basingstoke. New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 272 p.

⁷ Salakhyan, E. The emergence of Eastern European English. *World Englishes*. 2012. P. 331–350. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-971X.2012.01755.

arguing that Euro-English is a variant of English, serving as a *lingua franca* for continental European countries. It is evident that a distinctive feature of Euro-English is that it is originated in an environment of educated Europeans as a means of intercultural communication in the framework of negotiations, scientific conferences, telecommunications and business projects, and it has become an intercultural heritage, designed to activate the communicative processes in European languages and cultures.

In the pages that follow, it will be argued that, Euro-English variants of English nowadays create a special interlingua environment encompassing the "hybrid space" of intercultural communication, and reflect a "third culture" that promotes the unification of European multilingualism and multiculturalism in the context of the English language. Mainly, the recognition of Euro-English as a means of international communication to enhance communication among diverse cultures driven by the need of time but not by the matter of prestige, but by the need to accurately convey the contexts in the close inter-ethnic communication of a united Europe.

Recent research has suggested that the creation of the above mentioned variants of European English takes place in the context of mutual intercultural influence and linguistic contacts⁸. Thus, the standard British Pronunciation (RP) is also affected by the languages which are in contact. This process can be explained by extra linguistic factors such as the emergence of new realities related to the emigrant culture and the need for their nomination and acculturation.

The theory of language contacts was proposed by W. Weinreich⁹ in 1953 to identify the links between social and linguistic factors, although the study of language contacts began in the late 19th century in the works of L. Shcherba¹⁰. Subsequently, this concept was developed in numerous works of modern linguists Yu. Zhluktenko¹¹, O. Semenets¹², S.V. Semchinsky¹³ and other researchers. The study of language contacts has become an independent field in linguistics. According to some researchers, a new field in modern linguistics is forming "linguistics of language contacts" (contact linguistics).

⁸ Sebba M., Mahootian Sh., Jonsson C. *Language Mixing and Code-Switching 67 in Writing; Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse*. Routledge, UK, 2012. P. 22–29.

⁹ Weinreich U. *Languages in Contact*. The Hague : Mouton, 1968. 411 p.

¹⁰ Щерба Л. В. *Языковая система и речевая деятельность*. Москва : Едиториал УРСС, 2004. 432 с.

¹¹ Жлуктенко Ю. О. *Мовні контакти. Проблеми інтерлінгвістики*. Київ, 1966. 134 с.

¹² Семенець О.Є. *Соціолінгвістична типологія варіантів поліетнічної мови*. Мовознавство. 1986. № 2. С. 8–14.

¹³ Семчинський С. В. *Загальне мовознавство*. Київ : АТ «ОКО», 1996. 416 с.

As languages interact and enrich each other, language contacts reflect interaction and enrichment not only in the material and spiritual cultures of different people, the historical contacts between them, but also represent an extremely complex and multilevel process, which reflects the development of modern society. As a result, the linguistic term "language contacts" has become widespread in the field of sociolinguistic research to indicate the processes and results of socially mediated interaction of languages. Because of this, the language changes that have taken place have been investigated in contact languages due to external factors.

It has commonly been assumed that, the theory of language contacts has acquired the ability to reflect the main problems of language interaction, to identify the general and specific in this language phenomenon, to outline the basic concepts that contribute to the study of individual cases of language contact, to identify the general patterns of the process under study.

Another important point is a number of debates that prevail over the definition of the term "language contact", one of which is the multivariate name of the term: *linguistic contact*, *interlingua contacts*, *linguistic interaction*, *interaction of languages*, *languages mixing*, *mutual influence of languages*, *interference*, *code-switching*, *borrowing*, *hybridization*. Differences in the definition of the term "linguistic contact" are due to the fact that the researchers name the same concept differently; second, the variety of terminology is driven by methodology and the purpose of the study; another point is, there are numerous aspects of study of this issue: sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistics.

According to the concept of E. Haugen, the term "language contact" refers to the "alternate use of two or more languages by the same person", while the researcher does not specify either the level of language proficiency, or the conditions of their use or the degree of difference between language¹⁴. O. Akhmanova explains the meaning of "linguistic contact" as "a collision of languages that arises because of particular geographical, historical or social conditions that necessitate the linguistic communication of societies speaking different languages"¹⁵.

In contrast, Yu. Zhluktenko proposes the use of the term "language interaction", which has a broader interpretation and encompasses "the total dynamic processes that cause the transfer, copying or loss of units and models that stimulate or stop certain trends and processes created in the

¹⁴ Хауген Э. Языковой контакт. Новое в зарубежной лингвистике. Москва : Прогресс, 1972. Вып. VI: Языковые контакты. С. 61–81.

¹⁵ Ахманова О. С., Минаева Л. В. Место звучащей речи в науке о языке. Вопросы языкознания. 1977. № 6. С. 44–50.

language system, and cause the mutual imposition of differential features, interaction of articulatory and prosodic characteristics, and other areas"¹⁶. S. Semchynskyy divides the factors that cause the appearance of language contacts into several groups: extra-linguistic (historical and geographical, social and political, cultural, psychological and other areas), linguistic (genetic community, grammatical structure of languages)¹⁷. It can be concluded that each of these factors of language contacts is capable of influencing the development of languages in contact: mixing languages or absorbing one language into another as well as forming numerous language unions.

Another main criterion for the typology of language contacts developed by Yu. Zhluktenko is their duration and stability. According to this classification, all language contacts can be causal, that is, temporary, or permanent. M. Kocherhan distinguishes between the following types of linguistic contacts: direct and indirect; between related and unrelated languages; with one-sided and mutual influence; marginal (on adjacent territories) and inland (within the same territory); causal and permanent; natural (direct communication), artificial (schooling) and mixed (natural and artificial)¹⁸.

Based on this typology of language contacts, Slovak language interaction with English language system in Slovakia can be classified as a direct, related language, intra-regional, permanent, natural and artificial, whereas mutual influence of Slovak-English language contacts in the United Kingdom as causal, permanent and natural. As a consequence, such Slovak-English language contacts contribute to the emergence of a variety of linguistic phenomena. Thus, in some cases, they lead to borrowings and various types of linguistic interference, in others the convergent development of interacting languages, "code switching", and linguistic assimilation can be observed¹⁹.

J. Fishman²⁰ identifies four stages of the process of linguistic assimilation characteristics of immigrants. According to his theory, the first stage of English language acquisition is mainly done by native language. In situations where the use of the mother tongue is impossible, mainly when communicating in public institutions, at work and other areas

¹⁶ Жлуктенко Ю. А. Лингвистические аспекты двуязычия. Київ, 1974. 176 с.

¹⁷ Семчинський С. В. Семантична інтерференція мов. Київ : Вища школа, 1974. 256 с.

¹⁸ Кочерган, М. П. (2006). Основи зіставного мовознавства: Підручник. Київ: Видавничий центр «Академія».

¹⁹ Гавранек, Б. К. (1972). К проблеме смешения языков. Новое в лингвистике: Языковые контакты, VI, 94–107. Москва: Прогресс.

²⁰ Fishman, J.A. (2003). Bilingualism With and Without Diglossia; Diglossia With and Without Bilingualism. Sociolinguistics: the Essential Readings. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

the immigrant speaks mostly English. Thus, at this stage the interference from the English language is minimal, since the level of immigrant's English language proficiency is low and the number of people who speak it is small. The second stage of language assimilation tends to increase both the number of English-speaking immigrants and the degree of its mastering. Because English is spoken in the United Kingdom, unlike Slovak, it is used in more communication spheres, so it is possible to follow the process of linguistic interference, as a result of Slovak-English language contacts' interaction, particularly at suprasegmental level.

Finally, independent functioning of English and Slovak is observed on the third stage. It is the process of linguistic assimilation that characterizes English speech of the Slovaks who emigrated to the United Kingdom. Naturally, the total number of immigrants who speak English at this stage is the biggest. At the same time, there is a maximum blending of English and Slovak languages in different areas of communication. The final stage of language assimilation includes the removal or replacement of one's native language (Slovak) by English from all spheres of communication.

In the context of the usage of English and Slovak languages, the researchers distinguish such basic types of communication environments as family circle, study, work, travel and other areas.²¹ However, the Slovaks who live in the UK, can use Slovak mainly in their family, that is, in a limited social environment, or during annual meetings of foreign Slovaks, at seminars, congresses, conferences or festivals, organized in other EU countries.

1. Prosodic characteristics of English and Slovak languages

Prosodic characteristics of speech play a decisive role in speech making, as well as its linguistic and communicative function. The study of prosodic characteristics of English speech of the Slovaks is extremely relevant to linguists, since in comparison with the lexical and grammatical aspects of the language, phonetic changes take place much faster.

Prosody has long been a question of great interest in a wide range of fields. The focus of modern linguistic research is directed to the study of the role of prosody while conveying the meaning, that is, not only common models of realization, but also the limits of variability of prosodic characteristics while creating variants of linguistic combinations are revealed. The description of the prosodic characteristics of any language is traditionally considered to be a difficult task, since prosody is, on the one

²¹ Pokrivčáková S. (2013). Bilingual education in Slovakia: a case study. *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2.5 (Jun 2013), 10–19.

hand, the most universal feature of speech, and on the other, it reflects the unique and specific features that can be found in the suprasegmental level of each language.

Violations in the prosody of English speech of the Slovaks are due to the influence of the prosodic system and intonation skills in native language, to an insufficient degree of command of a foreign language as well as extra linguistic factors. The acoustic parameters of voice such as tone, rate of speech, timbre play a leading role in forming the perception of the speaker's personality²². Native speaker defines the speaker's belonging to another linguistic community, first and foremost by the nature of his pronunciation, that is, the particular phonetic coloration of the speech caused by the interfering influence of the phonetics of the native language.

A review of theoretical and experimental studies has led to the conclusion that the concept of prosody is to be interpreted as a complex of tonal, temporal, dynamic, timbre parameters, which at the perceptual level are perceived as melody of speech, rhythm, tempo, timbre, pausing, volume²³. The prosodic characteristics of the English-language text are interpreted as a set of suprasegmental units of speech that form the basis of intonation constructions and convey linguistic meanings. The speech signal, which contains the information about the emotional state of a person at the moment of communication is very important as well. Some linguists have devoted a number of scientific works to the study of the variability of intonational parameters of speech depending on emotional state²⁴.

English language melody is considered to be a major component of the intonation system and is implemented by raising or lowering the volume²⁵. The composition of the melody includes: tone level, range, interval, speed. Also, voice modulation or variation of melody, quality, intensity and duration influence the process of conveying the meaning and indicate individual characteristics of the speaker, such as his gender, age and emotional state. In addition, melody conveys a considerable amount of extra linguistic information about the speaker's emotional state, such as whether he is calm, angry, happy, exhausted, anxious, frustrated or sad²⁶. In English

²² Калита А. А. Система фонетичних засобів актуалізації смислу висловлювання (експериментально-фонетичне дослідження англійського емоційного мовлення): дис ... д-ра філол. наук: спец. 10.02.04. Київ, 2003. 566 с.

²³ Cruttenden A. Intonation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

²⁴ Brazil D. The Communicative Value of Intonation in English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

²⁵ Roach P. English Phonetics and Phonology. A practical course. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

²⁶ Crystal D. A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

language, the changes of the melody convey linguistic information about the syntactic components of the expression, provide lexical information about the meaning of the word and its grammatical function. The melody, that is intonation of the Slovak language is divided into three main types of melody in the statement: falling, rising, and half-falling²⁷.

In Slovak language, the stress is dynamic, whereas the word stress is fixed on the first syllable, for example, *Pozajtra sa s Vami stretneme*. Primary and secondary stresses are to be differentiated also. It should be noted that primary stress in Slovak is clearly observed in compound words, which are to be pronounced in a slower tempo, for instance, *polovodič* [ˈpɔlɔˈvodič], *polnohospodár* [ˈpɔlnɔˈhospodár], *spolupráca* [ˈspɔluˈpráca], *veľkoobchod* [ˈvɛlˈkoˈɔpxɔt], where upper vertical line indicates primary stress and the lower one indicates the secondary. Consequently, the dominance of the stressed syllable over unstressed in Slovak language results its rhythmic organization²⁸.

Areas where significant differences have been found include word stress. Slovak language is characterized by a fixed stress on the first syllable, signaling only about the beginning of words, since it does not change the meaning of the word unlike English²⁹. However, there are also some boundary connections, in which the stress appears to be a decisive prosodic feature and promotes better understanding of meaning perception. Thus, the stress in Slovak language has an important delimitative function, since it emphasizes the word and its boundaries, and becomes a basic rhythmic and semantic unit³⁰.

In the same way, word meaning in Slovak is changed by means of vowel lengthening, whereas vowel lengthening does not transmit the stress, it remains on the first syllable. It is important to note that all vowels and endings in Slovak should be pronounced clearly, without slurring the endings. Another distinctive feature of Slovak language is also stressed prepositions, as they can be both stressed and unstressed. Phrase stress as a component of intonation both in English, and in Slovak, serves to highlight the most semantically important word in a statement or its part, it can completely change the meaning of a word, giving it positive or negative connotations, signaling the psycho physiological features of the speaker and his sociocultural status.

²⁷ Beňuš Š., Šimko J. Rhythm and tempo in Slovak. Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Speech Prosody. Chicago, 2012. P. 502–505.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sabol J. Rytmická stavba reči. In: K. Buzássyová (Red.). Človek a jeho jazyk. 1. Jazyk ako fenomén kultúry. Na počesť profesora Jána Horeckého. Bratislava: Veda, 2000. P. 319–327.

³⁰ Ibid. P. 322.

The completeness of thought, depending on the communicative type of expression, is created by the final tone decrease or increase, which cause an auditory impression of logical emphasis, that is, the semantic completeness of expression is created, first of all, by means of intonation.

J. Sabol and Yu. Zimmermann point out that melody, syllable length and intensity are the stress correlates in Slovak language³¹. D. Fry concluded from experimental studies that melody plays the main role in English language, the second place makes syllable length, whereas intensity is on the third³². However, in spite of a number of common features, there are also distinctive ones, such as the reduction of vocalism in Slovak language which does not occur in the same amount as in English.

Melody contour of the Slovak language as a component of melody or as a separate component of its subsystem may be level, descending or ascending, and may also have a complex form, such as descending-ascending, ascending-descending or ascending-descending-ascending. Thus, these models of meaningful tone directions in intonation groups or in whole expressions perform the function of distinguishing the semantics of the same expression³³.

As for the broad tonal range both in Slovak and English languages, it is associated with excited or passionate speech. The most commonly used type of melody contour in Slovak is considered to be descending and ascending, while in English it is descending and descending-ascending. Consequently, the melody of Slovak literary language is characterized by its rising variation, whereas the English one has falling.

The alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables makes the basis of the rhythm in Slovak language, as well as timing and melody components. The configuration of stressed and unstressed syllables creates a primary rhythmic wave of speech that is the movement from composition to beat. The secondary rhythmic flow is the movement from beat to the sentence³⁴. Thus, English speech of the Slovaks will be different from the standard British variant of pronunciation because the difference in stressed and

³¹ Sabol J., Zimmermann J. On the Problem of the Stress in Literary Slovak. In: Z. Palková (Red), *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Philologica. 1. Phonetica Pragensia. 9. Charisteria viro doctissimo Přemysl Janota oblata*. Prague, Karolinum, Charles University Press, 1996. P. 245–250.

³² Fry D. B. Duration and intensity as physical correlates of linguistic stress. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*. 1955. Vol. 27. P. 765–768.

³³ Sawicka I. *An Outline of the Phonetic Typology of the Slavic Languages*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu M. Kopernika, 2001.

³⁴ Eddy E. *Správna výslovnosť: Základ efektívneho dorozumenia*. In Z. Straková, I. Cimermanová (Eds.). *Učiteľ cudzieho jazyka v kontexte primárneho vzdelávania (rozšírené vydanie)*. Prešov: Prešovská univerzita, 2013.

unstressed syllable length in their speech will not have the maximum rate as native English speakers have.

Tempo in Slovak language is a suprasegmental phenomenon that depends from the speed of articulation of separate vowels, combined with syllables in speech. J. Sabol in his monograph "Intonation of Slovak Literature Language" distinguishes between the use of slow and fast tempo³⁵. According to his definition, tempo serves as a sensitive indicator during articulatory and acoustic, perceptual realization, and also depends from the speed of objective reality emphasis by means of language and the speaker's response to a specific and immediate situation.

Tempo is also one of the main signals and regulators of the semantic component of the speech, that is, the greater the semantic manifestation is, the slower the tempo and vice versa. In addition, the characteristic feature of English and Slovak languages is that the completion of the utterance is often signaled by the slowing of articulation speed of its last part, by which the listener is encouraged to communicate.

Regarding the characteristic features of pauses in Slovak language, they are divided into two types: physiological and logical (determining)³⁶. Physiological one appears for breathing purposes, while logical is considered a language pause and is used to separate relatively independent and semantic utterances, to construct a hierarchy of spoken units. Pauses in Slovak language can be found in: 1) the boundaries of independent sentences, separated by full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark, for example, *Srdce jej išlo puknúť.* | *Z neopätovanej lásky?* | *Ale kdeže!* | *Bol som si istý, že keď splniš všetky podmienky, stane sa z teba víťaz celej súťaže.* ||; 2) in longer utterances: || *V malej dedinke pod horami* | *v jedno slnečné ráno* | *vybral sa susedovie Janko* | *na roľu otcovi pomáhať.* || 3) direct speech: || „*Mal som z toho poriadny šok,*“ | *povedal profesor podráždene.* || Also, creative pauses while reporting unexpected facts, transmitting certain emotions can be found in Slovak language³⁷.

Suprasegmental (prosodic) features, such as phrase stress, intonation, speech tempo, pauses and rhythm in Slovak language play a crucial role in transmitting the subjective attitude of the speaker to the utterance, as well

³⁵ Sabol J. Intonácia spisovnej slovenčiny. Slovakistické štúdie: zborník vybraných prednášok Letného seminára slovenského jazyka a kultúry SAS. Red. J. Mistrík. Martin: Matica slovenská, 1985. S. 465–470.

³⁶ Sabol J. Rytmická stavba reči. In: K. Buzássyová (Red.). Človek a jeho jazyk. 1. Jazyk ako fenomen kultúry. Na počesť profesora Jána Horeckého. Bratislava: Veda, 2000. P. 319–327.

³⁷ Kral Á. Pravidlá slovenskej výslovnosti. 2. vyd. Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1988.

as in the actual and the rhythmic division of the sentence³⁸. In fact, affirmative sentences and sentences beginning with an interrogative pronoun have a falling intonation, whereas, in interrogative sentences without interrogative pronoun rising intonation is observed.

Therefore some particular suprasegmental features that characterize the intonation the Slovak sentence can be observed: strong phrasal stress, broad tone interval, the speaker's desire to make each word significant, monotonous final beat melody, word emphasis is accomplished by syllable lengthening or the dynamic strengthening of the preceding syllable, stressed syllables' lengthening. The tonal, temporal and rhythmic organization of the phrase make it possible to detect intonation interference as a consequence of bilingualism.

The data of the analysis made, make it possible to conclude on the prosodic characteristics of English and Slovak languages. Each of the components of intonation has some meaning in English speech of the Slovaks. As a result of phonetic interference, speech accent appears, manifesting itself as a deviation from the English pronunciation standard (RP).

English speech of the Slovaks also reflects ethnical and specific characteristics of the primary language (mother tongue), which is mainly due to the complex ratio of articulation bases of native and foreign languages, and also contains a number of extra linguistic factors such as language competence, language ability, psychological type of the speaker, his/her social status as well as speech situation and other areas. Since melodic intervals (that is the difference in pitch frequency variation) are characterized by their increase in English, English speech is perceived by Slovaks as more singing and melodic than their mother tongue. Trying to imitate English language standard, Slovaks try to intonate clearly, and sometimes hyperbolize their pronunciation for better perception of their speech by native speakers³⁹.

Thus, the study of the prosodic characteristics of English and Slovak languages allows us to assert that at the suprasegmental level, the analyzed prosodic characteristics of the Slovak language are often transferred into English. Consequently, it hinders the perception of English by the Slovaks as well as influences the quality of their English speech.

³⁸ Bilá M. Duration of Pauses in Slovak and L1 Speaker's Productions of English. A Preliminary Investigation. 6th Conference on British, American and Canadian Studies. Conference Proceedings. Opava, Czech Republic, 2000.

³⁹ Kral'ová Z. The correlation of extraversion and L2 pronunciation quality. In: Current issues in teaching foreign languages. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2011. P. 162–191. ISBN 978-80-210-5608-4.

2. Phonetic interference in English Speech of the Slovaks

The concept of language interference is central in the theory of language contacts and in bilingualism theory. Since the condition of language interference appearance is a situation of bilingualism, the bilinguals' speech is the place of its formation⁴⁰.

For the first time in linguistics, the term "language interference" was used by the representative of Prague Linguistic School G. Vogt, who defined interference as a process of deviation from the standards in contact languages⁴¹. However, S. Semchynsky observes that the term primarily was used by A. Maye in the course of general lexicology⁴². Therefore, the term "interference" was acquired by A. Maye, but was widely recognized only after the publication of W. Weinreich's monograph "Language contacts"⁴³.

The definition of language interference proposed by W. Weinreich is still generally accepted, but at different times attempts have been made to clarify it. The phenomena of language interference are, according to W. Weinreich, those cases of deviation from the standard of any of the languages that take place in bilinguals' speech as a result of mastering more than one language, that is, through language contact.

The type of language interference, or its lack thereof, marks the degree of foreign language mastery, as well as the degree of correctness / incorrectness of the meaning convey in a foreign language as well as the degree of influence of the mother tongue⁴⁴. The unit of measurement of different degrees of language interference is considered to be interpheme. Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to intonation interphemes in English spoken by Slovaks.

Among the features of linguistic interference Yu. Zhluktenko distinguishes the use of "foreign" language material in the context of mother tongue, the formation of units from own linguistic material as the model of the language units in contact, stimulating or delaying the effects of language complex units on the functioning of units or models of another one, copying models of one system by means of another system⁴⁵. Thus, while studying language interference, the correlation of structures is analyzed as well as their mutual influence and interaction.

⁴⁰ Valian V. Bilingualism and Cognition. Bilingualism. Language and Cognition. 2015. Vol. 18(1). P. 3–24.

⁴¹ Vogt H. Language contact. Word. 1954. Vol. 10(2–3). P. 365–374.

⁴² Семчинський С. В. Семантична інтерференція мов. Київ: Вища школа, 1974. 256 с.

⁴³ Weinreich U. Languages in Contact. The Hague: Mouton, 1968. 411 p.

⁴⁴ Валігура О. Фонетична інтерференція в англійському мовленні українських білінгвів : монографія. Тернопіль : Підручники і посібники, 2008. 288 с.

⁴⁵ Жлуктенко Ю. А. Лингвистические аспекты двуязычия. Київ, 1974. 176 с.

The term “phonetic interference” is used here to refer to violation of the secondary language system and its norms as a result of interaction in the speaker's consciousness the phonetic systems and norms of pronunciation of two and more languages. This process is observed through the interference of listening and speaking skills formed on the basis of the interacting systems. Phonetic interference cases are possible when elements of a foreign language are absent or different in native language.

During phonetic interference, the speaker encounters a range of problems in the use of these languages, the perception and analysis of speech. Phonetic interference can influence thought formation about the speaker. Also, the native speaker can identify belonging of the speaker to a particular language community, assess the correct use of linguistic norms and the degree of compliance with the norms.

CONCLUSIONS

The process of mastering English pronunciation by Slovaks involves learning the skills of both sensory differentiation of non-native language sounds in the perception of oral speech, and motor differentiation of sounds during speech production. Mutual influence of English and Slovak language systems can occur at different stages of speech production as well as at the level of perception. Intercultural communication of the Slovaks is a form of communication, in which the ways of realization of different situations by the representatives of many cultures are not identical, that is, there are differences in their implementation and interpretation. It is important to take into account the specificities of the process of intercultural communication in order to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts when communicating with representatives of different linguistic and cultural communities in both English and Slovak languages.

English speech of the Slovaks as a result of interaction of language contacts in Slovakia and the United Kingdom is considered as interaction of universal, native to any native speaker, and national specific features formed under the influence of the phonetic system of the mother tongue.

SUMMARY

The study deals with the comprehensive study of prosodic characteristics of English Speech of the Slovaks and the identification of phonetic interference features. On the basis of existing theoretical and experimental works on the study of English speech of the Slovaks, we have qualified it as an interfered English speech formed as a result of the interaction of phonetic systems of the English and Slovak languages.

The study of English Speech of the Slovaks had a phased nature. The first stage is devoted to the study of the theoretical foundations of the prosodic characteristics of English Speech of the Slovaks, the analysis of some pronunciation peculiarities, the description of prosodic characteristics of English and Slovak languages.

The experimental research outcomes have shown that the specificity of English pronunciation of the Slovaks at the suprasegmental level is generated by the unconscious transfer of stable phonetic patterns of their native language into the structure of the second language. Thus, English pronunciation of the Slovaks forms national and specific features of the primary language, which are clearly manifested in the rhythmic organization of an oral expression and reflect the influence of the intonation skills of the speakers' native language. The phonetic interference features in English Speech of the Slovaks are found in rhythmic law transfer, as well as the tradition to stress all words in the utterance.

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