

LANGUAGES WITHIN BELARUSIAN-LITHUANIAN BORDERLAND: STATE, ASPECTS, REGIONAL COMMUNICATION

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A scientific interest to the analysis of linguistic contacts, processes and results of connection between two or more languages became more intensive recently. The urgency of issues and the importance of developed researches gave an opportunity to single out a separate line of investigation named as contact linguistics.

The Belarusian-Lithuanian borderland as a multicultural and multilingual zone is characterized by the fact that the population of this territory actively use the language of the titular nation as a primary communication means, but in everyday life two or even three languages are in use. Within the Belarusian boundary zone two modifications of the Belarusian language are used: dialectal and mixed Russian-Belarusian, called "trasyanka". The Belarusian literary language is used within the pedagogical sphere and representatives of the artistic intelligentsia. The Russian language serves as means of communication between representatives of all nationalities in the region (mostly the urban population) and is used within non-personal, official, public, professional sphere, mass culture, politics, religion, etc. The sphere of Polish language usage is limited by everyday life and religion. The Lithuanian language serves as means of communication in the sphere of everyday life, religion and professional art. The Lithuanian and Polish schools of general education may be identified as peculiar "islands" of lithuanistics and polonistics. During 2009/2010 academic year 544 pupils studied in Polish language (Grodno and Brest region) and 65 pupils studied in Lithuanian (Grodno region). In accordance with the results of the dialectological expeditions to Vilnius district the field of the Belarusian language usage in the south-eastern Lithuania has narrowed. It is connected with the formation of the independent Lithuanian state and changes of the contingent of native speakers of the Belarusian language within the border region.

The state and the development of the linguistic situation of the border region is influenced by its ethnic composition as well as the degree of a language knowledge at the given territory. In accordance with the results of the census of enumeration of the Republic of Belarus in 2009 the country is inhabited by 115 nationalities 5087 of which are Lithuanians (0.1% of total population). From 1970 to 2009 the number of Belarusian Lithuanians reduced by 38%. Of the total number of Lithuanians only 277 people (5, 5%) use the Lithuanian language in everyday communication. The number of Belarusians living in Lithuania decreased as well (1.7% in 1989, 1.2% in 2001, just over 1% in 2011).

The intensive linguistic contacts promoted the penetration of Belarusian words into the Lithuanian language and conversely Lithuanian words into the Belarusian language. As a result of the research it is revealed that in the Belarusian language and dialects more than 1,200 lexical units (including derived suffixed formations) are used. We can mark out within them about 120 words that have passed all the stages of lexical and semantic adaptation and firmly entrenched in the Belarusian literary language system and in its functional styles as well. The other lithuanisms are used in dialects are characterized by a narrow area of spreading. The basic types of borrowings, their thematic structure, the specific character of their phonetic and morphemic structure are presented in the draft created by the authors of the Dictionary of Baltic words. The presence of a big group of Baltic words in the lexical structure proves the intensive and prolonged contacts of the Belarusian and Baltic languages which began nearly fifteen hundred years ago and lengthen until the present time.