

ETHNIC CULTURAL MARKERS OF PERSONALITY SPEECH BEHAVIOR

У статті аналізуються існуючі кореляції між типом особи і мовною поведінкою індивідів різних національностей. Метою експериментального дослідження, заснованого на певних просодичних параметрах, є пошук універсальних і розрізняльних меж в мовній поведінці російських і американських говорять з різним психодинамічним типом.

Ключові слова: психодинамічний тип особистості, екстраверт, інтроверт, мовна поведінка, просодичні параметри.

В статье анализируются существующие корреляции между типом личности и речевым поведением индивидов различных национальностей. Целью экспериментального исследования, основанного на определенных просодических параметрах, является поиск универсальных и различительных черт в речевом поведении русских и американских говорящих с различным психодинамическим типом.

Ключевые слова: психодинамический тип личности, экстраверт, интроверт, речевое поведение, просодические параметры.

The article analyses the existing correlations between various personality types and speech behavior of individuals of different nationalities. The experimental study, based on certain prosodic parameters, aims at finding universal and differentiating features of speech behavior for Russian and American speakers of various psychodynamic personality types.

Key words: psychodynamic personality type, extravert, introvert, speech behavior, prosodic parameters.

It is known that formal acoustic characteristics of speech are a relevant source of information about such individual peculiarities as physical parameters (height, weight, age), appearance, sex, personality type, psychological state, character and intellect, social status and experience, occupation, education and cultural level, nationality and place of residence. In addition, they give the listener a possibility to understand what is implied by the speaker on semantic and lexical levels in the process of speech act. So, the prosodic variety of any utterance greatly depends on a wide spectrum of extralinguistic factors, by which we understand “different aspects (physical, psychological and social) of objective reality, which is reflected in a definite language and ensures its functioning” [1:524].

Thomas Pear [2] became a pioneer of modern experimental studies on speech temperament. He organized a phonetic experiment all over the UK via BBC, asking numerous audiences to give a detailed description of the speakers who read various radio texts. The results showed that the audience was able to identify sex and age of the speakers best of all. Besides, more than 12% of the respondents tried to begin the description with stereotyped temperamental characteristics among which extra- and introversion were the most popular choices.

It should be pointed out that such studies were very popular in Britain, Germany and the United States in the 1940-1960s and they were widely used in applied spheres. For instance, correlations between psychodynamics of individual and prosodic features on segmental and

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suprasegmental levels were the indicators of success for public speakers and they were taken into consideration in teaching professional actors, announcers, lecturers, TV hosts as well as in clinic medical experiments to identify nervous and hysterical personalities.

In Russian linguistics this issue was investigated from another angle. The majority of studies tend to be conducted in the frames of sociolinguistic and socio-cultural approaches and there was a number of attempts to study and evaluate the emotional state of the speaker by analyzing his speech parameters.

In modern research the significance of anthropological trend in the language is reflected in the active investigation of the concept of “language personality”. Sharing the views of the famous Russian scientist V.V. Vinogradov, Y.N. Karaulov [3] claims that the abovementioned concept has the right to exist only in the frames of a “national language personality” and he singles out the following structural components of this phenomenon: 1) the existence of the common language type; 2) the existence of the basic part of common perception of the world; 3) the existence of the sustainable complex of communicative features, determining ethnic cultural motives of speech behavior. In spite of the fact that the study creates the image of the Russian language personality, the typological character of such correlations seems to be obvious.

The scrupulous review of Russian scientific data shows that the major trends in studying interrelations of language personality discourse and its psychodynamic peculiarities are connected with psychosemantic activity of the individual.

S.S. Dashkova [4:367] considers oral spontaneous speech to be the most important source of information about the person and she confirms the hypothesis that “lexical and grammatical levels of speech are regulated not only by linguistic mechanisms of utterance but logically reflect more generalized personality traits in their structure”, in particular, individual-typological features of a human being. According to his personality type an individual produces an oral utterance, in which one or another group of linguistic signs is emphasized. Thus, in the speech of introverts syntagmatic encoding is more apparent and length of the sentences, frequent use of conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns give evidence of analytical activity style. At the same time, a completely different type of utterance – paradigmatic encoding – is characteristic of extraverts. The increasing amount of nouns and verbs, the greater lexical variety and the larger quantity of sentences form synthetic activity style.

The experimental study by T.I. Yerofeeva and O.V. Maramzina [5] is quite remarkable in this respect. Using H. Eysenck’s personality inventory to identify the type of temperament, the authors discovered correlations of psychodynamics with the average speech tempo as well as with morphological and syntactical characteristics of phrases. In the utterances of unstable extraverts nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs dominate. This personality type also uses the largest amount of questions and exclamatory sentences. Such markers gradually decrease in number from unstable to stable extraverts and further from unstable to stable introverts. The latter are characterized by the decrease of the total quantity of phrases, their relative monotony and the increase of conjunctions, interjections, particles and vocatives in the process of speech production.

As for the search of typological correspondence and differences in the prosodic structure of utterances based on personality types in various languages, such studies are scarce and are only at the initial stage of investigation. Among objective complications of such studies it should be pointed out that universal, typological and differentiating language features exhibit themselves

simultaneously.

Some valuable information for our research was found in the experimental studies of K.R. Scherer [6]. The author implements a principally innovative methodological strategy trying to identify, which parameters of voice qualities belong to valid “distal keys” or function as indicators of basic personality traits. The analysis itself is conducted on the basis of the so called “proximal keys” – auditory representation of speech distal keys, which are perceived and interpreted by native listeners. The acquired data indicate correlations of prosodic parameters both with individual typological and national peculiarities of speakers. Thus, for German speakers the average increase of fundamental frequency was not highly relevant, while for Americans the slightest change in this parameter indicated the rise in the scales of sociability and rigidity-flexibility. At the same time, timbre characteristics, positively related to emotional instability and neurotism as well as accuracy of articulation, were of great importance for German speakers in association with dominance, but this marker was insignificant for Americans.

Some linguists mention a considerable resemblance between extraverts and introverts of different nationalities: R.W. Ramsay compared Dutch and British students, emphasizing the identical manner of their speech behavior. J.M. Dewaele and A. Furnham [7] found that French, Spanish and German extraverts are more successful in second (foreign) language learning due to more productive short term memory, better stress resistance and larger volume of speech production.

Observing the influence of dialect and sociolect on speakers’ assessment ratings, B. Brown, W. Strong and A. Rencher [8] come to the following conclusion: experts’ judgment is frequently prone to cultural stereotypes. Thus, Anglo-Canadians were perceived as more intelligent, ambitious and attractive in comparison with Franco-Canadians both by Anglo-Canadian and Franco-Canadian experts. Such results repeatedly prove the necessity of search for more valid methods of analysis.

Some data on phonetic correlations in different languages are observed in J. Pittam’s [9] works. He concentrated his attention on creating spectral voice portraits of individuals. In comparative analysis of American and Polish informants spectrum differences were not apparent. But in the speech of Hungarians, Swedes and Germans some discrepancies were noted: male speakers demonstrated gradual decrease of energy from Swedes to Germans and Hungarians, while females showed less energy distribution in German, Swedish and Hungarian respectively. Compared to British speakers, Finnish representatives produced less energy fluctuations and a wider energy range was more characteristic of the British.

Our experimental study aimed at determining common typological and specific language features in the prosody of different psychodynamic personality types of Russian and American speakers was conducted by analyzing their spontaneous monologs on a certain topic.

Hereby, our hypothesis was that we should search for universal and typological features in the functions and categories of prosody and intonation, in general character of their realization, and specific features would be reflected in the degree of manifestation of formal and semantic markers.

Comparative analysis showed that for the western cultural tradition extraversion is considered to be the most preferable for social and speech behavior norms. Introverts, in their turn, demonstrate a high degree of similarity in both languages. Universality and differences manifest themselves on all levels of prosodic systems.

Among identical typological features for both Russian and American speakers the most

relevant are:

For extraverts: sharp dynamic and temporal contrasts, simultaneous variations in tempo and loudness, significant number of short pauses, single hesitation intervals in speech, long syntagms, considerable amount of rhythm-groups joint without pauses, small quantity of level terminal tones.

For introverts: smooth dynamic and temporal contrasts, moderate and slow speech tempo, domination of average and long pauses, considerable amount of silent hesitation phenomena, relatively short syntagms, monotony of speech melody, high recurrence of level terminal tones, significant number of narrow tones.

Distinctions are mostly represented by the degree of various prosodic features manifestation in either language. On the whole:

- in the Russian language all personality types demonstrate a more striking contrast in loudness;

- American speech tempo is perceived as a bit slower in comparison with Russian;

- variety of terminal tones functions as the basic differentiating marker for both languages in the study of national peculiarities of speech temperament.

Russian speakers display a scarcer and narrower range of terminal tones compared to their American counterparts. In addition, complex terminal tones in Russian samples are mostly represented by combinations of simple falling and rising tones and are few in number.

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