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Sociolinguistic factors determining language choice among bilingual Mansi children

The aim of contribution is to reveal main characteristics of bilingualism among Mansi children, based on author's experiences gained on fieldworks in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District.

In the last fifty years majority of Mansis live not only in multinational settlements, but also in multicultural and often multilingual families. (According to author's knowledge the age of the youngest generation raised in monolingual Mansi family is 30 years at the youngest.) A diversity of factors may affect the language choice, but neither the constant diminution of number of native Mansi speakers, nor the low prestige of the language stimulates Mansi children and young adults to choose it in a bilingual community. In larger settlements with considerable Mansi population schools and youth centres were established recently to compensate the influence of Russian language and culture and to increase interest towards Mansi language and culture.

Factors to describe bilingual Mansi children's sociolinguistic status as individuals:

- their rate compared to monolingual children of Mansi descent
- name, number of different languages spoken by bilingual Mansi children
- proficiency in different languages in question
- parents' and grandparents' sociolinguistic background
- size and ethnic consistence of children's hometown until age 17, etc.

The factors to describe bilingual children's sociolinguistic status as community:

- children's chance to acquire Mansi language at home (structure of traditional Mansi family, average life expectancy, etc.)
- standard of education of Mansi language at school
- standard of education of Mansi language at modern language revitalization centres
- prestige of Mansi language among children's Mansi-speaking relatives
- prestige of Mansi language among children's non-Mansi-speaking relatives
- prestige of Mansi language according to district's public opinion, etc.

Contribution can't lead to any final conclusion, as this very significant process (language revitalization movement) is just getting started, yet sketching the present states and attempting to predict the future of the process are nevertheless important.