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**Mixed structures in numeral phrases in the speech of Erzya–Russian bilinguals**

In my paper, I analyze code-switched numeral phrases in the language variety of Erzya–Russian bilinguals. My aim is to define the main types of numeral phrases that underwent code-switching, and to show traces of a possible ongoing change in the structure of these phrases in Erzya. I apply a grammatical approach using Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame model (2002) and Muysken's theoretical framework (2000). My corpus contains unstructured and structured interviews and spontaneous conversations from 40 Erzya–Russian bilinguals.

Code-switching, especially in the speech of balanced bilinguals, produces a mixed language variety where the matrix language and the embedded language categories, as indicated by the Matrix Language Frame model, cannot be distinguished unambiguously. In my Erzya–Russian data, this mixed code is especially striking in the use of numbers. According to Kovács (2001: 211), mixed structures might lead to a new composite matrix where it is not the matrix language of the utterance which sets the morphosyntactic frame of the sentence.

One of the NumP types occurring in the corpus, can be considered an embedded language island where the head (the number) has a nominal complement in a form required by the rules of the Russian language, for example, *śem'd'eśat vośem' let* ('seventy-eight years'). In other cases, however, the complement fails to follow the Russian rules and occurs in the nominative case: *sorok četiře god* ('forty-four years', verbatim 'year'). Mixed structures occur when the Russian number is followed by the Erzya equivalent of the word, or if the head is an Erzya number and it is accompanied by a Russian complement. The most interesting instances of mixing are phrases, in which the Erzya head has a Russian complement, and its form follows the rules of the Russian language as in *kilometra kavto* 'kilometer-SING.GEN two'. In this case, the order of the phrase is also formed according to the Russian rules, and it indicates uncertainty of the speaker. (In Erzya, approximation could have been expressed by a special suffix *-shka*.)

My preliminary results show that in colloquial Erzya numbers are used in their Russian or in a mixed form, especially when the number is bigger than ten. This tendency can be observed in its strongest form in case of dates and years. Even in the case of speakers having a very good command of Erzya, numbers cause some difficulty, as the informants

usually get acquainted with the Erzya numbers only at school. The same tendency can be observed in case of the days of the week and names of the months.

As a further step in my study, I intend to carry out a deeper analysis of mixed numeral phrases in the speech of Erzya-Russian bilinguals in order to show that these structures form one facet of an ongoing change leading towards a composite matrix and a mixed language mode.

## **Bibliography**

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