

**The development of a mixed language in the multilingual environment
(evidence from the Kukkuzi dialect)¹**

The Lower Luga area in the Leningrad region of Russia presents a vivid example of multilingualism. It is inhabited by speakers of three cognate Finnic languages: Votic, Ingrian, and Ingrian Finnish.

This specific multilingual environment gives rise to a whole range of interesting phenomena, one of which is contact or mixed languages. A famous example of this kind is the Kukkuzi dialect, which was traditionally classified as a dialect of Votic. In fact, many scholars argued this affiliation and treated Kukkuzi as a mixed Votic-Ingrian language ([Suhonen 1985], [Муслимов 2005]). Although the Kukkuzi dialect was claimed extinct in some publications ([Adler 1966]), we were lucky to collect some modern Kukkuzi data.

The analysis presented in this paper is based on a specially elaborated questionnaire (150 sentences) that was offered to the speakers of different Finnic dialects for translation from Russian into their native language. Using this questionnaire we compared data from the Lower Luga Votic, the Kukkuzi dialect, the Lower Luga Ingrian, and the Soikkola Ingrian. Also, we used published materials (first of all [Ariste 1968], [Vadja keele sõnaraamat 1990-2010]) to include data from the extinct Central Votic. The five Finnic dialects were analyzed using 40 binary features, divided into three approximately equal groups: phonetic, grammatical, and lexical.

The results of the comparison gave the following distribution of features among the dialects:

(Group1) Features that are present in both Ingrian dialects and the Kukkuzi dialect, but absent from the Votic dialects. This group combines features that reflect similarity between Kukkuzi and Ingrian. It appeared that only phonetic and lexical features constitute this group.

(Group2) Features that are present in both Votic dialects and the Kukkuzi dialect, but absent from Ingrian dialects. This group reflects similarity between Kukkuzi and Votic, and it contains mostly grammatical features.

(Group3) Features those are present in all the dialects except for the Soikkola Ingrian. This smaller group presents evidence of the Votic influence on the Lower Luga area, and contains phonetic, grammatical, and lexical features.

(Group4) Features that are present in three Lower Luga dialects, but absent from the Soikkola Ingrian and Central Votic. This small group shows specific characteristics of the Lower Luga area, and it also contains different types of features.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the analysis:

1. The Kukkozi dialect is not a random mixture of the Votic and Ingrian languages. It has Votic grammar and Ingrian vocabulary and phonetics. Therefore, one can conclude that it contains Votic substrate and Ingrian superstrate.

2. Votic had a bigger impact on the development of the Lower Luga dialects than Ingrian.

3. There are only few specific features of the Lower Luga area.

Basing on these conclusions we can put forward two hypotheses: a) the Kukkuzi dialect is the language of Votes who shifted to Ingrian; b) the Lower Luga Ingrian dialect emerged due to interaction of Ingrian and Votic: Ingrian speakers adapted their language to Votic, while many Votic speakers shifted to the new Ingrian variety.

References

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