

The cross-disciplinary thesis focuses on the non-linear dynamic interaction of social and linguistic factors influencing the process of intergenerational transmission of a heritage language in the immigrant family. The theoretical framework incorporates Reversing Language Shift theory (Fishman, 1991, 2001) adjusted to the family level with the help of the following social theories: Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998), Peer-Group Socialization (Harris, 1995) and Family Invisible Work (Okita, 2002). Structural aspects of Reversing Language Shift in the family are analyzed within Contact Linguistic theory (Myers-Scotton, 2002).

The dissertation presents an ethnographic longitudinal study of a single Russian-speaking community (27 big families, 72 children) and in-depth tape-recorded interviews with parents and their seven children in a selected family.

Chapter 3 discusses social aspects of intergenerational language transmission and elaborates Community of Practice framework: children's and adults' Communities of Practice dynamically merge and split in diverse domains of their practices. Linguistic reflexes of this process can be traced at diverse structural levels and in codeswitching patterns in the speech of adults and children. Whereas traditional Reversing Language Shift research perceives two distinct languages vying for status, the dissertation argues for the existing of four distinctly identifiable contact varieties combining Russian and Hebrew abstract and surface elements in diverse ways and in different proportions.

Chapter 4 presents a qualitative linguistic analysis of the Hebrew-influenced variety of Russian spoken by second-generation speakers based on the Contact Linguistic framework by Myers-Scotton (2002). The study proposes a typology of contact-induced changes commonly observed in their speech and investigation of the basic linguistic mechanisms underlying these changes.

Chapter 5 reports on the results of the interviews in Russian and Hebrew (2-3 hours) with seven siblings in the K. family:

- 1) detailed analysis of their language attitudes and identification
- 2) individual linguistic profiles recording distribution of Hebrew-induced changes in 1000-word excerpts from their interviews in Russian.

It describes the immigrant children's dramatic dialogue with their family cultural and linguistic heritage, diachronic changes in attitudes ranging from total rejection of Russian to enthusiastic linguistic rebirth, and particularly vivid bilingual practices. The study reveals the major differences between the siblings showing in rare detail the effects of age, age at immigration, personality, external experience, peer pressure and other factors on attitudes to Russian and Hebrew and on the linguistic properties of their speech in Russian.

Chapter 6 analyses family language management in the K. family. The parents' perspective on this process gives insight into the time-consuming and emotionally demanding task of heritage language maintenance. The different strategies adopted by

each parent and the different results achieved suggest important lessons for immigrant parents.

Chapter 7 finally ties up the various studies into a single analysis of the constructive interaction among various social, psychological, demographic and linguistic factors, thus avoiding the trap of claiming crude causality. Instead, a model of a continuum of proficiency levels in second-generation speakers of Russian as a heritage language is proposed.

Chapter 8 discusses multi-fold relations between language policies at the family level and at the national one.