

**Title:** The Problem of the Interaction between the Ukrainian and Russian Language Systems in the Territory of Later Settlement

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The current importance of this topic is emphasized by the insufficient study of Southern Russian dialects, in particular the Voronezh dialects, from the point of view of the interference between Russian and Ukrainian dialects. The topic belongs to the larger question of the study of island dialects, i.e., dialects which arose for one reason or another as the result of interaction with dialects of other languages – in this case, Ukrainian dialects on the territory of the Russian Federation.

The present study is based on research gathered from Ukrainian dialects in the Voronezh region. There are two main groups of dialects on the territory of the Voronezh region: a group of Russian dialects of southern origin and a group of dialects historically of Ukrainian origin. The dialects of the native Ukrainians have been heavily influenced by the surrounding southern Russian dialects and the Russian literary language. At the same time, though, it is characteristic for a high level of the language system of the “parent” dialect to be preserved in private dialect systems: the older generation preserves language traditions which serve as an organizing social core. The heavy influence of Russian can be seen at the lexical level. The language interference creates the problem of ethnic definition and self-determination among the inhabitants of the Ukrainian villages: not forming independent ethnos, they can, to an equal extent, lay claim to both Russian identity and the Ukrainian sub-ethnos.

The speakers of Ukrainian dialects in the territory in question are actively bilingual and freely pass from their Ukrainian dialect into Russian. In the situation of official dialogue Russian is used more often; in the situation of informal dialogue a native Ukrainian dialect is more common. This reflects, in particular, the desire not to be set apart from other speakers, since “speech connections” are then more psychologically and socially motivated.

Attention to this problem is motivated by extra-linguistic factors as well. In particular, research in regional studies shows that in the 1930s the population in rural settlements in most parts of the Voronezh region began to decline. Now villages in the Voronezh region are on the verge of disappearing. Because of that it is important to preserve the speech of these “disappearing dialects”.

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