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NUCLEUS POSITION TRANSFER IN ENGLISH: REASONS AND EFFECTS

НЕНОРМАТИВНЫЙ ПЕРЕНОС ЯДЕРНОГО УДАРЕНИЯ В АНГЛИЙСКОЙ СИНТАГМЕ: ПРИЧИНЫ И ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ

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The article addresses the issue of non-normative nucleus placement in the English utterance in the speech of Russian and Spanish learners of English. The research is aimed at determining the limits of nucleus position variation in the English sentence and revealing errors of non-native English language learners in nucleus position choice. Reasons for erratic realizations are studied. The results based on the perceptual test with British English native speakers allow describing differences and similarities in the nucleus position choice made by Spanish and Russian experiment participants. The perception test proves that non-normative nucleus shifts can lead to persistent communication misunderstanding. Perspectives for further research as well as the study results application are suggested.

Keywords: nucleus; English sentence; Russian; Spanish; accentual errors.

В статье рассматривается проблема ненормативных позиций ядерного фразового ударения в чтении английских предложений носителями испанского и русского языков. Целью исследования является определение границ вариантов позиции ядерного ударения в английской фразе,

выявление ненормативных вариантов его выбора, а также анализ причин их появления в в английской речи. Результаты, основанные на данных перцептивного эксперимента с участием носителей британского варианта английского языка, позволили представить описание сходств и различий в определении места ядерного ударения русскими и испанскими участниками экспериментальной части исследования. Перцептивный эксперимент доказал, что смещение ядерного ударения может стать причиной отсутствия взаимопоминания собеседников и их коммуникативной неудачи. Намечены перспективы дальнейшего исследования, а также определены возможные сферы применения представленных в статье результатов.

Ключевые слова: ядерное ударение; английское предложение; русский язык; испанский язык; акцентные ошибки.

The position of a communicative centre and the factors identifying its place in the English utterance has been under discussion for the last decades. Phonetic means of a communicative centre manifestation, which is nuclear stress, in native and non-native speech continue to attract researchers' attention and interest [4]. Apart from being interesting for linguistic research the issue has become an important subject from the point of view of English language teaching and learning methodology [3]. Being essential part of the lingua franca core, nucleus position is considered one of the phonological features to be taught to a foreigner, learning English, as its non-normative shifts can cause serious communication problems [1].

The literature review proves that the rules governing nucleus position and functions in Germanic and Romance languages differ significantly [2]. Division into non-plastic languages, namely Romance, and plastic ones (Germanic) can serve as the basis for linguistic research in this field and accounts for the choice of Spanish and English as the languages for this comparative study.

The author's teaching experience allows speaking about regular non-normative nucleus shifts in the English speech of the Russian learners of English. This fact as well as the difference in word order type in the Russian language in comparison to English, accounts for the choice of the Russian language for the present study.

The erratic nucleus positions in the English speech of the Spanish learners of the English language, caused by the two languages accentual structure differences, have been mentioned in a number of works [2]. The detailed comparative analyses of this type of errors in non-native English speech haven't been done yet.

One of the differences between English and Spanish is in the field of tonicity: while in English normative nucleus's position changes are common, in Spanish there is a strong tendency for the last lexical item to be a communi-

cative centre and as a result to be phonetically most prominent. The Russian language accentuation rules demonstrate more similarities with the English language with its fixed word order type in spite of the fact that both Russian and Spanish are characterized by relatively free word order.

The study is aimed at analyzing the tonicity aspect of English sentences read by the Russian and Spanish learners of English and revealing the possibility of Russian and Spanish language interference on the subjects' nucleus position choice in their non-native English speech.

500 English sentences with non-final nucleus position served as material for the experimental research. Their normative nucleus position was identified not only by the English language accentuation rules [Wells, 2006], but tested in the readings of 12 native British English speakers. The same dialogues were read by 40 Spanish students with different degrees of English language competence: A2 (30) and B2 (30), as well as by two groups of 30 Russian learners of English with the same levels of English language competence (A2 – 30 subjects, and B2 – 30 subjects).

Their readings served as the material for auditory analyses aimed at registration of non-normative nucleus positions. 10 British English native speakers participated in the perceptual test. Their task was to rate the acceptability of the utterances with shifted nucleus (in comparison with its correct position) and to make comments on any differences between sentences with different nuclei placement.

On the foundation of the British English native speakers' answers the accentual errors in the speech of the Spanish and Russian learners of English were classified.

The results for the Spanish speakers show that the number of non-normative nucleus positions for the speakers with A2 level of English language competence is significantly higher in comparison with the results of B2 group. It proves the importance of the language competence factor for the nucleus position choice in non-native speech.

The comparison of the English sentences and their Spanish translations revealed that the nucleus placement rules in the Spanish language account for the shifts of the nucleus in the English utterances read by the Spanish learners. In more than 60% of the readings the Spanish subjects moved the nucleus in the English sentences to the final position, following the rules which govern its placement in their native language.

The results for the Russian speakers are different: the number of correct realizations for the speakers of A2 and B2 groups is approximately the same. The analyses didn't reveal any significant differences between the readings of the subjects from these two groups. The non-normative variants are characterized by the shift of the nucleus from either the beginning or the middle of

the sentence to the final lexical item. The reasons for nucleus shifts errors in the English speech of the Russian learners of English can be explained by both negative transfers from the Russian language and ignorance of certain rules of sentence accents distribution rules in the English language. For example, the group of common errors registered in the English speech of the majority of the Russian subjects consists of English cliché phrases. They do not seem to present difficulty for the foreign learners of English as they are frequently used both in the teaching materials and in the classroom. Anyway, the non-normative nucleus position shifts have been registered in such common utterances as “*Wait a moment*” (with nucleus on the word ‘moment’), “*Time flies*” (with nucleus on the word ‘time’), “*Just a matter of time*” (with nucleus on the word ‘matter’).

The results allow concluding that the total number of correct nucleus positions in the readings of the Russian subjects prevails over the number of correct readings registered in the readings of the Spanish experiment participants of the same English language competence level. The English and the Russian languages’ similarities in the area of tonicity can account for such results. The negative transfer in the readings of the Spanish subjects disappears the higher the language competence of the learners of English is.

To identify the degree of seriousness of these types of errors, the perception test with the participation of 10 British native speakers was conducted. The British subjects’ task was to comment on the sentence with the nucleus shift position meaning change. According to the perception test results, the erratic nucleus positions make the experimental phrases sound strange and inappropriate within the limits of the given context. Moreover, in a number of cases the erratic nucleus placement could cause misunderstanding and prevent effective communication.

The results of the research can be used in teaching English to the Russian and Spanish learners of English in the conditions of interference with their native languages, as well as in delivering theory courses in general and applied phonetics.

Further study with a wider range of languages as well as more numerous groups of subjects can reveal other factors causing tonicity errors in non-native English speech as well as serve as a basis for developing more effective teaching materials.

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АЛЬТЕРНАТИВНЫЙ ВЗГЛЯД НА КОМПЬЮТЕРНУЮ ЛИНГВИСТИКУ

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS

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Стремительное распространение компьютерных технологий обусловило необходимость разработки новых систем коммуникации. Особое место в иерархии цифровых возможностей научной и прикладной деятельности современных разработчиков занимает такое объемное явление, как искусственный интеллект. Среди современных направлений лингвистических исследований выделяется экстралингвистическая машинная обработка данных.

Ключевые слова: кубиты; интеграция языкового фактора; враждебный машинный интеллект; экстралингвистическая коммуникация; коммуникативный кризис; модельное мышление; альтернативные методы.

An impetuous spreading of computer technologies has stipulated the necessity of the development of new communications systems. A special place in the hierarchy of computational capabilities of both scientific and applied activities of modern developers is taken by the artificial intelligence which is a volumetric phenomenon. It is possible to set extralinguistic machine data processing along with the modern linguistic research.

Keywords: qubits; language integration factor; hostile machine intelligence; extralinguistic communication; communicative crisis; model thinking; alternative perspectives.

Считается, что объект изучения современной лингвистики охватывает практически все сферы человеческой деятельности и находится