

Nina Dobrushina

(National Research University Higher School of Economics)

### Linguistic endogamy in highland Daghestan

The Republic of Daghestan is an area of high language density and diversity. A traditional Daghestanian village lies on a steep mountain slope in terraces, the roofs of the houses located lower providing part of floor to the higher ones. Villages are isolated from one another, with clearly identifiable borders. Mountain ridges and rivers enhance the isolation. It is however assumed that language boundaries were maintained not only by the landscape but also by traditional ethnic and often village-level endogamy (Comrie 2008). In most Daghestanian villages, marriage partners were taken exclusively from the same village and often from the same patrilineal clan (*tukhum* – Karpov 2010). Linguistically mixed marriages were uncommon (Karafet et al. 2016). There is evidence that the tradition of endogamic marriages goes deep back in time (more than a thousand years ago, according to Lavrov 1978). Today, villagers often say that marriage rules are not as strict as they used to be, but even now, villages with 300-400 households can have as few as one or two mixed families.

Strict endogamy of Daghestan is at odds with what is known about marriage practices in many other indigenous communities. As reported for Vanuatu (Francois 2012: 94), Vaupes River basin (Sorensen 1967, Stenzel 2005, Aikhenvald 2010, Chernela 2013), Lower Fungdom area of Cameroon (Lupke 2016: 53), linguistic exogamy is widely spread. Linguistic exogamy is such a common practice that Singer & Harris 2016 listed it as one of the four typical features of the areas with what they call small-scale multilingualism.

This study is aimed at revealing the language practices which underlie linguistic endogamy. By studying the infrequent cases of mixed marriages in highland Daghestan, I look for the answers to following questions: was the acquisition of the new language by the spouse expected? Who acquired the language of the spouse, the wife or the husband? How the acquisition proceeded – who taught the new language and how quickly the language was acquired? Which language was used to communicate with the children? Were children in a mixed family expected to speak both mother's and father's languages?

The data on mixed marriages was so far collected in fifteen villages. 39 women of different age (from the 1950s to the 1980s years of birth) were interviewed by the author. The data show that taking spouse from another village is usually caused by some negative circumstances. In most cases of mixed marriages observed so far, the man was a widower.

In the case of mixed marriages, the woman almost invariably moves to the village of her husband. If, for some reason, the couple does not want to live in the husband's village, they would rather reside in the city than in the village of the wife. A woman is expected to quickly learn the language of her husband and to communicate with her husband, his family and other villagers using their language. The woman's duty is to bring up her child using the language of his (her) father. A woman only speaks her native language with her blood relatives, whom she does not see frequently.

Although most mechanisms described so far are aimed at displacing wife's language, people express positive feelings towards the fact that the children born in a mixed marriage can grow up with the command of two languages. Women sometimes reported that their mothers-in-

law encouraged them to speak two languages with their children, because “knowing several languages is enriching”.

To sum up, the preliminary research showed that the endogamy, patrilineal clanship and strong propensity to have one dominant language in the family combines with a feeling of respect towards bilingualism. The latter fact is supported by further observation that Daghestanians show pride in the number of languages they can speak, or their ancestors could speak.

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