

PHONOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF NEO-ETYMOLOGIZED PHONEMES

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Under neo-etymologization we understand the substitution of one member of a neutralizable opposition by another in the position of maximum differentiation. According to the terminology of the Moscow phonologists, the distinctive unit found in the position of neutralization and absent in the position of maximum differentiation is called a hyperphoneme, and it is transcribed phonologically by two or more symbols, e.g., since there is neutralization between /o/ and /a/ in unstressed syllables, the word for 'dog' sobaka, phonetically [sa¹baka], is phonologically /s¹o-a¹bāka/. The etymologically correct underlying phoneme often appears in the orthography (as in sobaka) and very often also in the pronunciation of alternating forms where the unit is found in the position of maximum differentiation, like acc. vódu /vódu/, pronounced [¹vodu] 'water', nom. vodá, /v¹o-a¹dá/, pronounced [va¹da]. By neo-etymologization the hyperphoneme is interpreted as representing the other possible phoneme (or one of the other possible phonemes), and this is inserted in the position of maximum differentiation. There is thus a diachronical change of underlying phoneme. This may appear in the literary language, like Tóma, nickname of Tamára, (sometimes both appear like Lóra and Lára, from Larissa). Very often such neo-etymologizations appear in jargon (like lor for laringólog), in children's speech (like [¹f¹aki], plur. of flag /fla¹g-k¹/, pronounced [f¹ak] with final devoicing), also in dialectal and in colloquial speech, i.e. in cases where correction from orthography does not so easily take place. The loosening of the semantic relations between cognate forms favours these developments like [¹votot¹ka] in dialectal speech (in the orthography vodočka) from [votka] /vó¹d-t¹ka/, related etymologically to vodá 'water' (the d has become voiceless before a voiceless consonant, and is interpreted as t).

The existing explanations by factors of morphology or substratum are, in our opinion, not quite correct.