

PHONETIC PECULIARITIES OF THE FAR EAST PIDGIN RUSSIAN

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ABSTRACT

While analysing phonetic interference that took place in the process of formation of the Far East Pidgin Russian the following types of interference were discovered: phonemic substitution, underdifferentiation, overdifferentiation of phonemes, differentiation by non-relevant features.

INTRODUCTION

Taking part in the field studies of the Udihe language in the Ussuri region the following fact was discovered. A number of elderly Udihe speakers, obviously unable to express themselves in Russian, use as a second language a Russian-based pidgin. Far East Pidgin Russian (PR), as it appears, was in a wide use in the areas along the Amour-river course and also in the Ussuri region in the end of the XIX - beginning of the XX centuries. Nowadays it is still used by a limited number of speakers from the oldest generation of Udihe, Nanai and other Tungus-Manchu nationalities. The PR is definitely a filiation of the Russian-Chinese trade language formed in the process of Russian-Chinese trade relationships, but used also by other Far East ethnoses (Mongol, Tungus, Manchu etc) while being in the contacts with Russians. The fact that it was also used in their own communication is

not excluded.

The basic data for the present report were obtained in the Ussuri region mainly from Udihe native speakers. The PR seems worth being investigated as an interesting case of interaction between typologically dissimilar language systems. It is a Russian-based pidgin, therefore, its vocabulary is mainly of Russian origin, but the latter is realized exclusively by means of the Udihe phonetics. The fact mentioned together with an unusual word order, reduced grammar changed word meaning and native Udihe intonation, makes this language hardly understandable for an unused Russian speaker.

The aim of the present work is to demonstrate the regularity in the substitution rules, functioning while PR speakers pronounce words of Russian origin, to trace back interference processes that took place during the formation of the PR. The picture is complicated by the secondary influence of Russian, the first language of the young Udihe generation.

CONSONANTS

One of the general principles of consonant functioning in Udihe is the weakening in the intervocalic position. Thus voiced plosives /b/ and /g/ are realized as fricatives [β] and [ɣ] between vowels. In the same way unvoiced plosives /p/ and /k/ that are realized as aspirated in the ini-

tial position, loose this feature between vowels (/k/ also appears as a velar [q] near /a/, /o/).

Table I. presents a comparison of the

(row I - Udihe)		(row II - Russian)		Bi-labial	Labio-dental	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal	
Plosives	Non-sonorants	Affricates	Pure	p ^h (p) β(β')		t ^h (t) d		k ^h (k') g(g')	(q)		ʔ	
				pp' ββ'		tt' dd'		kk' gg'				
			with one focus			(ts) (dz)						
	Sonorants & Semi-vowels	Non-sonorants	with the second middle focus			ts						
			with the second back focus			tś dź						
						(tʃ) (dʒ)						
			tʃ									
	Nasal sonorants		m (m')		n	ɲ	ŋ					
			m m'		n	ɲ						
Fricatives	Non-sonorants	with one focus	φ (β)			j	(ɣ)	χ		h		
		with the second middle focus		ff' vv'	ss' zz'							
		with the second back focus			ś							
	Sonorants & Semi-vowels	Non-sonorants	Semi-vowels	w		ʃʃ' ʒʒ'						
			Lateral			l						
					ɬ ɬ'							
	Rolled sonorants				ʀ	ʀ'						

Analysing the interaction of consonant systems in the languages, the following cases of phonetic interference can be pointed out.

I. The substitution of Russian phonemes by the articulatory similar but not fully identical Udihe sounds, e.g. Russian non-palatalized unvoiced plosives are represented as corresponding Udihe consonants: /p/ → [p^h-], [-p-]; /t/ → [t^h-], [-t-]; /k/ → [k^h-], [q] (near /a/, /o/), [k] (after /s/), cf. [p^ho'to] (<потом) 'then', [p^hapa] (<папа) 'father', [qa'pušta]

Udihe (row I) and Russian (row II) consonant systems. The main phonemic variants relevant for the interference processes are in the brackets.

(<капуста) 'cabbage', [u'pala] (<упала) 'he fall', [qam'pap] (<кампания) 'together with (postposition)', [t^hə'rawa] (<трава) 'grass', [t^ho'qoj] (<такой) 'so', [i't^hutə] (<туда) 'here', [qa'sa] (<каша) 'gruel', [qo'rotə] (<огород) 'garden', [k^hə'də] (<когда) 'when', [k^həp'kən] (<капкан) 'trap', [do'loqo] (<далёко) 'far away', [bo's'toqə] (<Восток) (place name).

Russian palatalized unvoiced plosives /p'/ and /k'/ correspond to phonemic variants functioning in Udihe: [p'ej] (<пей) 'he

drinks', [k'i'tajsk'i] (<китайский) 'Chinese', [k'u'p'i] (<купила) '(he) bought', [k'i'p'i] (<кипи) '(he) boils'. As for palatalized /t'/, Udihe lacks the corresponding sound, thus it is regularly replaced by the affricate /tʃ/, e.g. [tsur'ma] (<тюрема) 'prison', [detsi] (<дети) 'child'.

2. One of the most characteristic types of interference in the PR is the under-differentiation of features. Thus, Russian unvoiced fricative /s/ (with one focus) acquires the second middle focus → [ś]: [śə'p'i] (<спи) '(he) sleeps', [qa'sa] (<коса) 'sand bank', [iś'kaj] (<искай) '(he) seeks'. The same rule is detected for the palatalized /s'/ → [ś]: [śi'di] (<сиди) '(he) sits', [śo'r'em'] (<всё время) 'all the time', 'waśa] (<Вася) (personal name). The result of the process described is the neutralization of the opposition /s/ - /s'/ in the PR. At the same time Udihe ś represents Russian unvoiced sibilants [ʃ] and [ʒ] which are not found in Udihe, e.g. [śej] (<шей) '(he) sews', [waśa] (<ваша) 'you, your (pl.)', [uśu'waj] (<вышивай) '(he) embroiders', [i'śo] (<еще) 'still, yet', [b'eśi] (<вещи) 'things, belongings'. So, four Russian phonemes turn to be represented by a single Udihe phoneme.

The parallel rule can be deduced for Russian voiced [z], [z'] and [ʒ], which are not found in Udihe. The rule of their representation is the following: in the word initial position and after /n/ they are substituted by Udihe affricate /tʃ/ (with the second middle focus), e.g.:

[dʒap'tra] (<завтра) 'tomorrow', [dʒub'ərə] (<изюбрь) 'roe', [dʒi'ma] (<зима) 'winter', [dʒi'na] (<жена) 'wife', [dʒep'sin] (<женщина) 'woman', [p^handʒa] (<фанза) 'house of a Chinese type'.

In the other positions they are represented by the voiced member of the opposition /ś/ - /ź/, that seems to be characteristic only for the PR, e.g.: [śu'zój] (<чужой) 'strange', [maɣa'ziŋ] (<магазин) 'shop', [qol'χozə] (<колхоз) 'kolkhoz'. Another case of the underdifferentiation presents the way of representation of Russian liquids /l/, /l'/, /r/ and /r'/. Udihe does not distinguish these phonemes, here one finds only one sound of the group in question - lateral /l/ (not velarized as Russian [ɭ]). Thus, Russian word русский was adopted in Udihe as [lu'sa], this word must be considered as a word of Udihe origin. In the PR the same word ap-

pears in the form [ru'sku]. PR speakers pronounce both /l/ and /r/ (tapping), but still mix them in the intervocalic position. In this aspect the PR follows the general trend of consonant weakening in the middle position, functioning in Udihe. In the initial position /l/ and /r/ never mix in the PR, while their mixture between vowels leads to hypercorrection, e.g.:

[luqa] (<лук) 'onion', [śəli'poj] (<слепой) 'blind', [riśa] (<рис) 'rice', [riβa] (<рыба) 'fish', [malis'a] (<малец) 'baby', [p'ir'otə] (<вперед) 'forward', [b'erəj] (<белый) 'white', [p^harqam] (<палкой) 'with a stick', [aś'tara] (<осталась) '(he) remained'.

3. There are also cases of phonemic differentiation by non-relevant features. Thus, voiced labio-dentals /v/ and /v'/ which in Russian form an opposition based on the palatalization feature, are substituted in the PR in the following way: non-palatalized /v/ is replaced by the semi-vowel /w/, while palatalized /v'/ is substituted by palatalized bi-labial plosive [b'] or by its fricative variant [β'] in the intervocalic position. The processes described result in annihilation of the former opposition, e.g.: [wani] (<Ваня) (personal name), [da'waj] (<давай) 'let', [t^həra'wa] (<трава) 'grass', [d^ə'wa] (<два) 'two', [b'idələ] (<видела) '(he) saw', [b'eśir'əm] (<вечером) 'in the evening', [dʒi'β'i] (<живи) 'life', [aś'taβ'i] (<остави) '(he) leaves'.

VOWELS

As for the vocalic system, Russian and Udihe differ greatly. One of the most prominent characteristics of Udihe is the vowel harmony. E.R.Schneider distinguishes three harmonic series:

I.	a	ae	e	} + i u
II.	o	ə	y	
III.		ə		

On the other hand, Russian vocalic system is characterized by the vowel reduction in the unstressed position. Thus, one can state that the vowels [a] and [o] neutralized in the unstressed position in Russian, in Udihe belong to different harmonic series. The interaction of such systems results in the following: the vowel set of a word in the PR depends on the quality of the stressed vowel; in other words, in the PR Russian reduced [ə] can be substituted in the two ways, by [a] or [o] according to the quality of the vowel stressed, e.g.:

[t^ham də'rawa qo'loj] (<там дрова колой)
 '(he) cleaves wood yonder', [ro'botəj
 'noxo i'wo] (<работай много его) 'he
 works much', [adi'naqawə] (<одинаковый)
 'alike, as (postposition)', [xo'roši] (<
 хороший) 'good, well'.

Vowels /e/ and /i/ in Udihe belong to the
 same harmonic series, these sounds form
 no opposition based on harmonic rules.

In Russian /e/ and /i/ are neutralized in
 the unstressed position. One must take in-
 to account that The Russian language ac-
 quisition was performed in its oral form,
 therefore [e] is registered in the PR only
 in the stressed position; in other posi-
 tions one invariably finds [i], e.g.:

[tši'wo tši'wo] (<чере-чере) 'different',
 ['deda] (<дед) 'old man, husband',
 [niši'wo ni 'šej i'wo] (<ничего не шей
 его) '(she) sews nothing', [pi u'm'ej]
 (<не умеЙ) '(he) cannot'.

One of the main characteristics of the
 Udihe vocalic system is the phonological
 opposition based on vowel length. The
 vowel length in the penultimate syllable
 defines the processes of reduction in the
 final position, cf. Udihe [bīpi] --
 [bɪp]; [lāēsi] -- [lāés]; [ətətām'i] --
 [ətətām] 'I worked' (compare with the
 present tense [ətətām'i] 'I work' where
 the last vowel /i/ is always preserved).

So, the reduction happens only if the vo-
 wel of the penultimate syllable is long.
 In the PR the following facts are registe-
 red: /i/ in the word final position is
 sometimes reduced as if some vowels were
 perceived as phonologically long. This
 phenomenon may be treated as overdifferen-
 tiation of phonemes, cf. these pronuncia-
 tion variants: [wāpi] - [wāp] (<Ваня)
 (personal name), [wāsa] - [wās] 'you, your'.
 In such cases the non-phonological leng-
 thening of the stressed vowel seems to
 have been interpreted by PR speakers as
 the phonological vowel length.

CONCLUSION

As it can be seen, even from the purely
 phonetic point of view the PR should not
 be regarded as a mere Russian dialect or
 as a spontaneously corrupted form of lan-
 guage. Here one evidently deals with a
 pidgin, an auxiliary means of communi-
 cation between communities that do not sha-
 re a common language. It seems essential
 for the formation of a true pidgin that
 more than two mutually unintelligible lan-
 guages in contact are required. This con-
 dition is fulfilled in the area, where
 the main PR data were obtained - some 50-
 40 years ago in the Ussuri region it was
 used by Udihe, Nanai and Chinese ethnoses.
 The study of the PR is relevant for the
 general interpretation of the pidginiza-
 tion theory, for it is an example of an
 European-based and in the same time inde-
 pendent creation. No monogenetic theory
 can be applied to this language and never-
 theless it shares many similarities, con-
 sidered usually as proves of the monoge-
 netic origin of European-based pidgins.
 These are elimination of inflections for
 number, gender and case; identity of ad-
 verb and adjective, use of iteration for
 intensification. All these peculiarities
 are also characteristic for the PR, though
 the latter by no means can be defined as
 a product of a relexification process.
 Being "independent" the PR turns to be an
 example of a "classicle type" pidgin.
 Material discussed above shows that the
 PR lexicon presents a wholesale adoption
 from Russian, while its phonology can be
 described as a truly "interlinguistic"
 (it shares definite peculiarities from
 both languages in contact plus some aris-
 en in the PR itself). Descending to the
 phonetic level one finds that practically
 the whole set of the concrete phonemic re-
 alizations owes to the vernacular "sub-
 stratum" language.

These observations seem important for the
 determination of the contribution of dif-
 ferent languages participating in the pro-
 cess of a pidgin formation.

Below we present a bibliography of the Far
 East Pidgin Russian, that was not included
 in the J.E.Reinecke's Bibliography:
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