

MODERN TENDENCIES IN STANDARD RUSSIAN SOUND SYSTEM OF THE END OF THE XX-th CENTURY

M. Kalentchouk

Moscow Pedagogical State University, Russia

ABSTRACT

The aim of present study includes working out a detailed description of the present-day younger generation pronunciation peculiarities; characterizing of the development tendencies of Standard Russian sound system; revealing the factors which influence this development. The study is based on the results of the sociophonetic research of the younger generation speech.

There are two different types of sound laws. Some of them predict the realization of the phoneme in one possible way: synchronistically the word or the morpheme can be pronounced correctly only in a one sound form ([в^ад^а] 'water', [дру^к] 'friend', etc.). The change of the pronunciation standard is connected with the phonetic regularities of a different type which describe the facts of synchronistic coexistence of pronunciation variants. For example, [в'э']сна and [в'и']сна 'spring', бу^ло[шн]ая and бу^ло[чн]ая ('bakery'), п[о]эт and п[а']эт 'poet', etc. The variability of the pronunciation of the words is usually a stage in the transition from one nonvariable sound law to another. The present study is concentrated on the description of the sound variants.

Such variants may occur because of their belonging to different pronunciation sub-systems: sociolinguistic ones (chronological, local or sex) and language ones (connected with phonetic peculiarities of such groups of words as borrowings, proper names, functional words, terms, interjections, etc.).

Most of the available information

about modern Russian pronunciation is based on the results of the investigations which were held in the middle of the century [1;4;6]. A new generation has grown since that time and there is no doubt that their pronunciation differs from the one of the preceding generation.

In order to fix a "young" pronunciation standard the sociophonetic study of the speech of the younger generation was carried out [3]. It is based on the data obtained from different experiments: tape-recordings of specially composed texts read aloud (200 informants); responses to written questionnaires (1000 informants); the tape-recorded interviews (200 informants). Speakers were selected on the basis of demographic characteristics: all of them were Muscovites, their parents also came from Moscow; the sample includes young men and women (born in 1965-73), who studied in different Moscow universities. All speakers used the Standard form of Russian.

The comparison of two chronological subsystems - the present-day younger generation pronunciation peculiarities and the sound speech of the preceding generation constitute the major focus of this paper.

CONSONANTS

The main development tendency is the complication of consonant system, which is reflected in decrease of positional dependence of sounds [5, 336-343; 6, 442-446].

The process of overcoming softness of the sounds in the position before the soft consonant. In the beginning of the century the softness of the consonant before the

soft sound was obligatory: ю[п'к']у ('skirts'), на ла[м'п']е ('on the lamp'), че[т'в']е[р]е ('Thursday'), etc.

The studies of the speech of the middle of the century showed that consonant groups realized in three different ways: 1) for some sounds the old law is still working: dental+soft dental (мо[с'т']ук 'little bridge'); [н] + [ч'], [ш:] бараба[н'-ч']ук 'little drum', же[н'ш:]уна 'woman'); 2) for some consonant groups a new law became obligatory: the sound is always hard before the soft consonant: labial + soft back lingual (ла[пк']у 'paws'), etc.; 3) most of consonant groups allow variants in realization: dental + soft labial ([д'в']е[р]ь and [дв']е[р]ь 'door'; labial+soft labial (о бо[мб']е and о бо[мб']е 'about the bomb'); dental or labial+[j] ([с'ж']а[х]а[м]ь and [сж]а[х]а[м]ь 'go down', [в']у[ж]а and [в]у[ж]а 'snow storm') [1; 4; 5; 6].

The results of our experiments show that in younger generation standard overcoming of assimilation affected even such consonant groups which "opposed" this process longer than others (dental + dental). It is possible to assume that the process of overcoming assimilation has achieved a new stage. For different consonant groups this process started in a different time. What contributed to the unevenness of this process was the fact that some positions supported the pronunciation of a soft sound and some of them - the pronunciation of a hard one. The obtained data show that there is a contrast in behavior of consonants before the soft sound in a "young" standard inside the root and in sandhi (п^ас^ян^с 'patience' and с^зе^ха^ть 'to go down' - the frequency of occurrence of the soft sound in the position before the soft is 100% and 38% correspondingly); in the frequently used words and in rare (о ба^нке 'about the ribbon' and об об^ску^ра^нн^е 'about the obscurant' - 95% and 55%); after the hard consonant and after the vowel (ше^сть 'six' and ше^рсть 'the wool' - 99% and

35%); inside the word and in the beginning of the word (за^сте^кла^ть 'to glaze' and сте^кло 'glass' - 94% and 68%), etc.

According to orthoepic situation of the middle of the century it was possible to suggest that the next stage of the analyzed process will level the differences between various positions and it would lead to further overcoming of assimilative softness. But regardless of expectations of linguists the process of assimilation is slowing down prolonging the stage of coexistence of soft/hard variants. The alternation of the consonant with the zero sound. The traditional norms of pronunciation of three and more consonants with [т, д] between the dental sounds or between the dental and [к] which demanded the alternation of the middle sound with zero sound are still working only for few consonant groups. The tendency for pronunciation of all sounds in such combinations affected more and more consonant groups (стн, з^дн,стл, н^тк, н^дк, н^тс, н^дк, etc.). Such groups are pronounced with all sounds in actual phrase positions when the speakers want to emphasize some word; in terms; in rare words; in other cases they are used without middle sound. The alternation of the sounds [ж:] / [ж:]. Some Russian roots may be pronounced with the traditional variant [ж:] equally with modern [ж:] (ву[ж:]а^ть - ву[ж:]а^ть 'to screech'). The obtained data revealed that in "young" speech standard only 15 words are pronounced with the soft long consonant, most of these words are rather rare, and the word дрож^жу 'yeast' is the only one which is used with the soft sound more frequently than with the hard one. The alternation of the sounds [ш:] / [ш:]. The correlation of these variants in younger generation standard is different in different positions. Inside the root only the sound [ш:] is used (и[ш:]у 'to look for'). But on the

morpheme boundaries both of the variants are used (pa[ш':]ecать - pa[ш'ч']ecать 'to comb'). First of all the choice of the variant depends on the type of morpheme boundary: on the boundaries of fusion tendency the sound [ш':] is more probable, but on the boundaries of agglutinative tendency the sound [ш'ч'] is used more frequently. The frequency of occurrence of sound [ш':] on different morphemic sature are following: preposition + word (40%); prefix + root (49%), root + suffix (83%)

VOWELS

The main development tendency is the simplification of vowel system, which is manifested in the increase of phoneme neutralization.

The modern model of phoneme neutralization in the unstressed position after the soft consonant is the following: 4 phonemes out of 5 which constitute the phonemic system of Russian vowels coincide in the sound [и'] (<a> [ч'и']сы 'clock', <o> [в'и']сна 'spring', <э> c[т'и']на 'wall', <и> к[р'и']чать 'to shout') and only the phoneme <y> is realized in a different way ([л'у]бовь 'love'). It's known that <y> is also involving in neutralization which leads to absolute simplification of the system [5, 22]. The obtained data show that according to the younger generation standard the pronunciations like [т'и']льпан instead of [т'у']льпан 'tulip' are very rare. Such facts mostly occur in the words where there are conditions for assimilation with a vowel of another syllable: [б'и']ли'мень instead of [б'у']ли'мень 'bulletin'. But there is one position - in the suffix of the Present Participle - where the variant [и'] is pronounced even more frequently than [y]: ко[л'и']щии and ко[л'у']щии 'thrusting', подоба[и']щии and подоба[у']щии 'proper', etc. In the unstressed positions after the hard consonant the neutralization model is more complicated

- 4 different sounds are pronounced: [a^h], [ɔ], [ы], [y] as a realization of 5 phonemes. In younger generation standard we see more evidence of the increase of neutralization: the phoneme <y> is being involved in neutralization after the hard consonants as well as after the soft ones (ɛ[ɣ]бернатор instead of ɛ[y]бернатор 'governor', шт[ɣ]катыр instead of шт[y]катыр 'plasterer'); the replacement of unstressed [ы] by [ɣ] in all positions except the 1-st pretonic and the final open syllables (in our experiments the auditors were unable to distinguish such pairs of words as домово́й - ды́мово́й, вы́жить - вы́жать, тайна́ми-тайны́ми, etc., which can be an evidence of the fact that the speakers pronounced these words in the same way - ɔ[ɣ]мово́й, вы́ж[ɣ]ть, тайн[ɣ]ми).

The tendency for neutralization is not working in marginal subsystems, which is the means of opposing them to general system: in borrowings (п[о]эт 'poet'), in terms ф[о]не́ма 'phoneme'), in interjections ([о]го), etc.

Other vowel variants which were analyzed in the present study - the sounds in the 1-st pretonic syllable after [ш], [ж], [ц] which correspond to letter а. At the beginning of the century the sound [ы] was pronounced in this position: ж[ы]ра 'heat', ш[ы]ги 'steps'. Nowadays the sound [ы] is replaced by [а] almost in all the words (ж[а]ра, ш[а]ги). But in some words the old variant is still in use (ж[ы]леть 'to feel sorry', etc). The comparison of sound standard of two generations revealed that the number of words allowing such pronunciation is decreasing abruptly and we continue to use sound [ы] mostly in the words in which the sounds [и] or [э] are in stressed position what make possible the vowel assimilation (ɔвадц[ы]ти 'twenty', ж[ы]смин 'jasmine', etc.

GRAMMAR FACTORS OF PHONETIC DEVELOPMENT

There are some grammar factors which can influence the sound system development: the tendency for agglutination in word-building and for analytism in morphology [2].

The tendency for agglutination is revealed first of all in the peculiar realization of phonemes in sandhi which makes the morpheme boundaries more obvious for speakers. The investigators of sound speech of the middle of the century determined the intensification of the juncture signals: there was a contrast between a phoneme's realization inside the morphemes and on their boundaries (compare: е[с'л]у 'if' - [с#л']ева 'to the left'; [з'м']ея 'a snake' - па[з#м']енять 'to change'; бру[ш':]атый 'made of bars' - [ш'ч']итывать 'to read from' etc. But the results of the present study demonstrated different picture: in "young" pronunciation standard the signals of juncture are becoming less and less important due to the process of leveling the sound regularities inside the morpheme and in sandhi (compare: е[с'л]у - [с'л']ева; [з'м']ея - па[з'м']енять; бру[ш':]атый - [ш':]итывать). It doesn't mean that there is no difference at all between the realization of phonemes inside the morpheme and in sandhi but the contrast is not so vivid as it was before.

Secondly, the intensification of agglutination in word-building can show itself in the tendency for uniform shape of the morpheme. For example, in "older" standard there was a pronunciation па[з']думать 'to change one's mind', but па[з'жэ]хаться 'to drive', ле[з']ла 'she got into', but ле[з']ли 'they got into', etc. In "young" standard the shape of morphemes in above-mentioned words is not changing: па[з]думать - па[зэ]хаться, ле[з]ла - ле[з]ли.

The tendency for analytism in morphology is reflected in phonetic signals of word separateness. There is a phonetic feature which is able to manifest the grammar independency of a word or part of a word - the absence of vowel reduction in the unstressed positions. It may occur: 1) in prefixes and in first stems of shortenings, which aspire to have a status of a separate analytic word {п[о]слезастра 'the day after tomorrow'; ɔ[о]беденный 'before the dinner'; М[о]сква 'Moscow bank'; Т[е]хникум 'minimum of technical knowledge', etc.) 2) in unstressed functional words (prepositions, conjunctions, particles) and pronouns (в[о]ль улицы 'along the street'; мороз, н[о] солнце 'it's sunny but cold'; м[о]и брат 'my brother'. In all these cases the grammar independence of the language unit is weakened but such words and morphemes are "reminding" of their aspiration for "sovereignty" by a peculiar realization of vowels phonemes.

REFERENCES

- [1] Avanesov R.I. (1984), *Russkoje literaturnoje proiznoshenije*, Moskva: Prosvetshenije.
- [2] Glovinskaja M.J., Pyina N.E. Kuzmina S.M., Panov M.V. (1971), "O grammaticheskich factorach razvitija foneticheskoy systemy sovremennogo russkogo jazyka", *Razvitije fonetyky sovremennogo russkogo jazyka*, Moskva: Nauka, pp. 20-33.
- [3] Kalentchouk M.L. (1993), *Orphoepicheskaja sistema sovremennogo russkogo jazyka*: Dissertacia doktora filologichskich nauk, Moskva.
- [4] Panov M.V. (1967), *Russkaja Fonetyka*, Moskva: Prosvetshenije.
- [5] Panov M.V. (1990), *Istoria russkogo literaturnogo proiznoshenija XVIII-XX vv.*, Moskva: Nauka.
- [6] *Fonetyka sovremennogo russkogo jazyka: Sociologo-lingvističeskoe issledovanie* (1967), pod red. Panova M.V., Moskva: Nauka.