

Prevailing tendencies of North Lemkian resettled dialects in Western Ukraine: phonetic aspect

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Abstract – The aim of this article is to describe the most characteristic phonetic features of the North Lemkian dialects, highlighting the basic tendencies of the functioning of such dialects at the start of the 21st century. The thrust of this research lies in the fact that after significant dialectical studies relating to the pre deportation period, this is the first accomplished study relating to the sounding of these dialects as a direct consequence of resettlement to the Western Ukrainian region.

Keywords – North Lemkian migrant resettled dialect, phonetic feature, vowel and consonant sounds, sandhi voice sounding type, affricate, interference.

I. Introduction

It is known that North Lemkian dialects (the Carpathian group of south-western dialects) of the Ukrainian language, which are the subject of this research, experienced in the 20th century major territorial upheavals: pre 1945 the native area of the Lemkian dialect which spanned across the territory of three nations (Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine) – encountered deplorable forced repatriation as a result of Operation Vistula which changed the geographical domicile of native speakers of these dialects (today Lemkos are to be found in various regions of Ukraine and Poland; the deportation was not limited to Slovakian Lemkos). In accordance with this pact in line with “Soviet” policy (the assimilation of Ukrainians) this was achieved by the forced resettlement of people from their time immemorial Ukrainian territory – North Lemkian region (Lemkivshchyna). As a consequence of this, from the middle of the 20th century, speakers of the dialect, lost the chance to live on their native land, to preserve and develop without impediment their cultural traditions, language. Actually, no other Ukrainian dialect, apart from the North Lemkian one, lost its territorial ties, was dispersed and dissipated amongst other languages and dialects (Ukrainian, Polish, etc). Consequently, the dialect continued to function in a different linguistic environment, resulting in major changes within the system of analyzed dialects. It is the reason that study, exploration and attention given to North Lemkian resettled dialects is today one of the most topical areas of research for dialectologists.

The aim of this article, based on personal notes of people representing various generations, resettled from the North Lemkian region to the provinces of Lviv, Ternopil or Ivano-Frankivsk respectively, is to display by investigation the presence in the dialects certain phonetic features, expose phonetic processes, which take place in circumstances where levelling out of the dialect occurs; highlight current trends in the functioning of North Lemkian resettled dialects in western Ukraine.

II. The most important features of the phonetic system of North Lemkian dialects

With regard to the North Lemkian dialect characteristics, the following can be included:

- fixed accent on the penultimate syllable (known as paroxytone): *de'revo* ‘tree’, *ka'pel'ux* ‘hat’, *pero* ‘pen’, *py'rohy* ‘dumplings’; *apty'karsk'ij* ‘pharmaceutical’, *marynu'vanyj* ‘marinated’, *prezna'čenyj* ‘appointed’; *rosne* ‘3 person singular of grow’, *poser'baty* ‘slurp’, *prova'dyty* ‘accompany’, *s'tyskat* ‘3 person singular of squeezes’, *trajtyty* ‘zazybumu’;
- hardening of soft consonants positioned at the end of the word: *h'ist* ‘guest’, *kam'in* ‘stone’, *lozeled* ‘black ice’, *pal'ec* ‘finger’, *rad'ist* ‘joy’, *t'in* ‘shade’, *v'i'delec* ‘fork’, *za'kalec* ‘underbaked piece of bread, etc’, *žolud* ‘acorn’;
- hardening of the suffixal **z**, **c**, **s** before **k**: *bo'hack'i* ‘wealthy’, *kupeck'ij* ‘mercantile’, *naučy'tel'sk'ij* ‘teaching’, *sel'sk'i* ‘rural’, *uzko* ‘narrow’;
- presence of alveolaric (in pronunciation where the tongue touches the upper palatal and teeth) of the consonant **l** in place of the soft fronted palatal point **l'**: *da'leko* ‘far away’, *ka'valec* ‘piece’, *vedvi* ‘hardly / scarcely’, *lem* ‘only’, *lemky* ‘lemkos’, *len* ‘linseed’, *pal'ec* ‘finger’, *s'malec* ‘lard’;
- usage of the hard **n** before **k** as velar **ŋ**: *bo'denka* ‘wooden crockery for making butter’, *bo'ženkyty* ‘lamenting, sighing to God’, *bo'ňk* ‘horse-fly’, *jab'liňka* ‘apple-tree’, *kožu'shaňka* ‘sleeveless sheepskin coat’, *kuku'rydzyaňka* ‘sweetcorn tops’, *m'i'shaňka* ‘multi herbal’, *pa'liňka* ‘vodka’, *pid'peňka* ‘honey agaric’, *stu'denka* ‘well-spring’, *va'ňenka* ‘bathtub’;
- presence, mainly, of non-prosthetic construction of words (attached consonants **v**, **h** preceding the initial letter **o**): *astrjab* ‘hawk’, *Osyp* ‘Joseph’ (but *Jevka* ‘Eve’), *on* ‘he’, *ona* ‘she’, *or'i'x* ‘nut / walnut’, *osmyj* ‘eighth’ (*osem'nac'et* ‘eighteen’, *osem'des'at* ‘eighty’, *osem'sto* ‘eight hundred’), *ostryj* ‘sharp’ (*vyost'renyj* ‘sharpened’ – even when there is a combination of vowels), *luc'a*, *luc'a* ‘sheep’, *uhel* ‘carbon tree / carboniferous’, *uhol* ‘building edge, corner of premises’, *ud'ka* ‘fishing-rod’, *už* ‘snake’, *uzdečka* ‘bridle’, *uzko* ‘narrow’, *uzlyky* ‘plural of knot – knots’, *ujko* ‘uncle’, *ujčyna* ‘aunt’, *uluj* ‘beehive’, *ulyc'a* ‘street’, *luxo* ‘ear’, *uš* ‘louse’ and others;
- transition of the leading consonant (and also the preposition) **v** into **h** (positioned preceding the voiced consonant) and into **x** (positioned preceding the voiceless consonant): *hdivec* ‘widower’, *h'lasnyj* ‘own / personal’, *h'mytysya* ‘to wash ...self’, *h'merty* ‘to die’, *h'nočy* ‘at night’, *xtol'pyty* ‘to drown’, *xčyty* ‘to teach’; *h bo'lot'i* ‘in the mud’, *h vod'i* ‘in the water’, *h d'byrvax* ‘in firewood’, *h žyml'i* ‘in the ground’, *h v'it'i* ‘in summer’, *h m'ist'i* ‘in the town’, *h ne'd'il'u* ‘on Sunday’, *h olzer'i* ‘in the lake’, *x pol'u* ‘in the field’, *x kol'mor'i* ‘in the pantry’, *x tob'i* ‘in thyself’, *x t'i b'oži* ‘in this house’;
- presence in interword phonetics sandhi voice sounding type (voiceless consonant [positioned at the end of the word] situated before the next sonorous, voice sounding consonant or vowel [positioned at the beginning of the

next word] effected as voice sounding): /jag /dub 'like an oak tree', /biž bvi 'only that', /n'idž /bude 'the night will come'; /bolyd n'a ho/lova 'my head hurts', /jag vyvo/zbyly 'when ... transported out', /jag jem s''p'ivav 'how I sang', /naž /nar'id 'our people', /r'iz /vel'kbyj 'grew tall', /p'ryjmud v š'kolu 'will accept to school', /tag /musyt /bity 'so it must be', /tyh /l'ude''j 'those people'; v /l'iz /idut '(they) are going to the forest', /jag /ohen 'like fire', /tag /u nas /bilo 'how it was he re', /xod /Andr'ij /p'ide 'if only Andrew will go'.

Particular features of North Lemkian dialects, distinctive also to some other Carpathian dialects, are:

- maintaining the distinguishing **y** (in the front line of the upper-middle elevation) – **yi** (in the rear line of the upper-middle elevation): /bity 'to be' i /byty 'to be eat'; /vyty (for example 'to make a nest') i /vity (for example 'how like a wolf'); /byžka 'spoon' i /lyška 'fox'; /daj my 'give me', /zrobiv ty 'did for you' i /my, /ty ('we, you' – personal pronoun);
- presence of affricate **dž/dz** (sound created from the moment the air passage closure is overcome, which is not destroyed completely, but gradually transits to the glottis [1, p. 26]) replacing ***dj**: /dojž, /doždž 'rain', /dož/džyvka 'rainwater', /medža 'boundary', /čudžyj 'alien', /po'medže 'between', /pr'adža 'yarn', /prjadžbnyja 'spinning', /rđa 'rust', /sadža 'soot', /vydžynya 'vision'.

Additionally, dialectologists of North Lemkian dialects continuously maintain (especially its presence in other south-western dialects of the Ukrainian language) the following characteristics:

- dorsal-palatal pronunciation (very soft pronunciation with preceding sibilant sound) sounds **z, c, s, dž** as **z'', c'', s'', dž''**: /z''ilya 'herb', /z''ivyalj 'withered', /z''vizda 'star'; /c''vak 'nail', /c''virkun 'зоолог. grasshopper', /c''vitok 'flower'; /bab'ratys''ya 'splashing by hand in anything liquid', /m''s''yačok 'caressing shape of the moon', /molo'd''is''i 'tender form of word of youth', /s''cyus 'woodpile, neatly stacked row of wood', /s''i'dyty 'to sit', /šče''s''tya 'luck', /s''vato 'feastday', /jas''nity''ya 'to brighten up, to shine';
- usage of **d, t** as **g, k** in certain forms: /givka 'adult girl', /k''isny 'tight', /k''is''nyava 'crush', /kisto 'dough';
- absence of double consonants in noun neuter gender to ***ije**: /žytya 'life', /zadanya 'task', /z''ilya 'herb', /sušbnyja 'seasoning', /čytanya 'reading'.

III. Current trends of functioning dialects due to settlements

The analysis of current North Lemkian dialect usage has provided the criteria to pool the speakers of the said dialect into the following groupings: 1) *participants, who can speak the dialect* – these are people, usually of elderly age, who freely conversed in the dialect prior to resettlement or immediately after deportation, lived in the Lemkian dialect environment in villages, consequently not coming into intensive contact with the standard Ukrainian language and its respective dialects. In this respect, we include participants from both the second and younger generations, who have consciously mastered the dialect of their parents; 2) *participants, in whom the dialect is somewhat impaired* – in this category there are persons with secondary or higher education, who live in villages or towns; who subject to the prevailing language environment are able to apply that or other type of language usage, differentiating between the

various dialect peculiarities and the standard language norm. As a result of such encounters the spoken dialect succumbs to interference, entanglement occurs during the selection of the appropriate speaking option, with parallel forms resulting (dialectic and literary); 3) *participants, who have lost the ability to speak in the said dialect* – persons who on the basis of ethnic ties classify themselves as exponents of North Lemkian dialects, but have totally lost the skill of communication in the dialect as a result of various lingual and other factors (in Soviet times, the politics of the so-called “non-prestigious” dialect; terms and conditions for study and employment; mass media information structures, etc). This analyzed grouping, gives rise to the largest cause for concern in the eyes of researchers, if there already exists the generation, with which one of the ancient of the Ukrainian dialectic continuum may disappear.

Available notes and records of North Lemkian dialects at the beginning of the 21st century give credence to the following generalisations: in the researched dialects of western Ukrainian regions leveling processes prevail under the influence of encounters with the mainstream Ukrainian language, its dialects, but also due to the resultant mix, due to direct interference here of the Russian language. To the most fundamental phonetic processes here one can include: weakening of the dialectic accent (so-called paroxy tone); gradual loss of differentiation **u – yi**; reduction in the frequency of utilisation of dorsal-palatal pronunciation of **s** and other.

Conclusion

Correspondingly in light of the above, presently the following basic trends in functioning North Lemkian dialects have been noted: a) reduced domain of usage; b) changes in dialect due to encounters with south-western dialects; c) convergence with the standard Ukrainian language; d) intensive enrichment of dialects formed as a mark of new realities of life.

The area where the North Lemkian dialect prevailed, after the Second World War encountered substantial irreversible changes – the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian region was lost due to the forced deportation of the inhabitants of these lands [2, p. 93]. Against the background of these circumstances, dialectologists are forced to state that the gradual decline of ancient dialectic features: currently and further ahead are becoming more difficult in identifying living dialectic speech, as every year the numbers of typical native dialect speakers decline, assimilation processes abound, brought about by inter-dialectic and inter-language encounters.

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