PHONOLOGIC INNOVATIONS IN
CANADIAN UKRAINIAN

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Although officially bilingual (English and French), Canada furnishes us with interesting data with regard to other languages and dialects as well. Colonization, conquest, and immigration have brought several different languages here into contact and have thereby established an unofficial multilingualism, which is particularly evident in the larger cities, like Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, a.o.

Ukrainian, spoken by about half a million of Canadians of Ukrainian origin, is the leading Slavic language in the country exercising – especially in Western Canada – an assimilative influence upon the other Slavic languages, particularly on Polish, Slovak, Byelorussian, etc.

There are three main types of Ukrainian dialects in Canada:

(1) *symbiotic* dialects, preserving their typical features and coexisting with each other;

(2) *enclavic* dialects, isolated in their development and preserving pure character in their structure;

(3) *mixed* dialects, hybridizing features of two or more dialects and thus forming innovations unknown to the first two categories.

In the present paper one aspect of such innovations is discussed, namely the *phonological* changes which occur as the result of intermingling dialects. The material is taken from author's notes and published works (since 1949).[1]

As the greatest number of Ukrainian Canadians came from Western Ukraine, their dialects preponderate in the spoken language. This is evidently manifested in the phonological sphere. One of the most typical innovations in this respect refers to the identification of the coronally palatalized spirants $s' - z'$ with the dorsal $ś - ź$, and further developing them into palatal $š' - ž'$ type. The first change occurs in the speech of the older generation of Western Ukrainian origin, e.g.:

> *Jak śa m'ajete?* "how do you do" instead: *jak s'a m'ajete?*
> *ś'ad' te na śidl'o* "sit down on the saddle" instead: *s'a'd' te na s'idl'o*
> *m'ij źat' u̯žau̯* "my son-in-law took" instead: *m'ij z'at' u̯z'au̯*

śʲino ṷ lʲʲiśi "the hay is in the forest" instead: *śʲino u lʲʲiśʲi*
pryneᵞśʲitʲ śudʲy "bring (it) here" instead: *pryneᵞsʲʲitʲ sʲudʲy*
my rozijšlʲyś "we departed" instead: *my rozijšlʲyś*, etc.

As is well known, the first, coronal, softening of *s – z* into *s' – z'* occurs in the majority of Ukrainian dialects in Europe, whereas the dorsal palatalization is restricted to West Ukrainian dialects of Galicia only (so-called Dnister-dialects, Lemkian and others on the Ukrainian-Polish lingual boundary).[2] The latter pronunciation is predominant in Canada; the Galician dialects have a long tradition in this country (at least beginning with 1891) and, consequently, they are influencing the pronunciation of the small minority of coronally softening speakers. At first it occurs in mixed families, in societies, churches, schools, etc., and then expands on the whole society levelling differences and causing an innovation in the dialect of the minority.

The young generation of Ukrainian Canadians goes a step further in this respect developing a new category which seems to be still stronger and comprising all children born in Canada from the Ukrainian stock. It is the identification of the dorsally palatalized *ś – ź* with the *š' – ž'* type:

> *jak š'a mʲajete?* (or: *jak š'i mʲajete?*)
> *š'ʲadʲte na š'idlʲo*
> *mij tʲato ṷžʲʲaṷ* (or:…*ṷžʲʲeṷ*)
> *š'ʲino ṷ lʲʲiš'i*, etc.

Another innovation, parallel to the above, concerns the system of the affricates *c – ʒ*. In the pronunciation of the older generation the palatalized *c' – ʒ'* are usually identified with dorsally palatal *ć – ʒ́* type, e.g.:

c'ʲac'a, c'ʲac'ka	>	*ćaća, ćaćka* "beauty"
prʲosyt's'a	>	*prʲosyćśa* "one is requested"
rʲadis'tʲ	>	*rʲadiść* "joy"
šistʲ	>	*šiść* "six"
ʒ'ob	>	*ʒob* "peak"
Hʲanʒ'a	>	*Hańʒa* "Anny"
ʲOlʲʒ'a	>	*Olʲʒa* "Olly", etc.

The young generation develops in such cases the identity of *ć – ʒ́* with *č' – ǯ'*, and the above examples will be pronounced as: *č'ʲač'a, prʲosyčč'a* (or even: *prʲosyč'a*), *rʲadiš'č', š'iš'č', ʒ'ob, Hańʒ'a, Olʲʒ'a*, etc.

This pronunciation has a great influence on the written language; it is not seldom that such spelling mistakes, as вші (=всі "all"), шішчь (or hypercorrect: сішть, сість), шім (instead of сім "7"), шміятишя (=сміятися "to smile"), шяду (=сяду

² Cf. I. Ziłyński, *Opis fonetyczny języka ukraińskiego* (=PAU, Prace Komisji Językowej, No. 19) (Kraków, 1932), p. 85.

"I shall sit down"), чя (=ця "this"), волошя (=волосся "hair") etc. are found in letters, in texts written by school children, etc.

It is also testified by the English transliteration of Ukrainian names in Canada, e.g.

Dziuba (=*ʒuba*)	transliterated as	*Juba*
Dzurman (=*ʒurman*)	,,	*Germaine*
Czishek (=*čyžyk*)	,,	*Chisick*[3]
Dziobko (=*ʒ'obko*)	,,	*Jopko*, etc.

On the other hand it influences the way of perception of English loans into Canadian Ukrainian, viz.

ʒun, ʒulʲaj	<	Engl.	June, July
śur	<	,,	sure
ynśʲurans	<	,,	insurance, etc.
ʒoṷk	<	,,	joke
ʒoṷ	<	,,	Joe
ʒan	<	,,	John
Božʲury	<	,,	Beausejour, Man.

The transfer of phonemes from English to Ukrainian and vice versa reveals the identification of similar sound patterns and the substitution according to Haugens observation: the phonemes have the shape of the primary system but acquire at least some of the distributions of the secondary one.[4] In some cases this innovation effects genuine words and names, e.g.: *mʲožu* instead of *mʲožu* – мóжу "I can"; *Mʲala ja mʲuźa, mʲuža ja mʲala* (from a popular song: *mʲuža* instead of *mʲuža* – мужа "husband"); *Ždan* Personal name changed so from *Ždan* – Ждан; *prʲos'u < prʲošu* – прóшу "I ask", and several others.

The dorsalization of *s', z', c', ʒ'* with a tendency to the identification of these consonants with *š', ž', č', ǯ'* was known to European Ukrainian dialects only in a very limited quantity.[5] There was a constant struggle between the orthoepical standards and the peculiarities of the dialects. With the unification of the Ukrainian territory in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1945) this process made a great progress through school, radio, speeches, lectures, etc. As it can be observed on the younger generation from Western Ukraine, the coronal palatalization of *s', z', c', ʒ'* is gaining field and the dorsal one is receding. This is an entirely opposite process to what is being developed in Canada (and to some extent in the United States of America as well). In this respect Canadian Ukrainian is exposed to a process of an alienation

³ Cf. R. B. Klymasz, *A classified dictionary of Slavic surname changes in Canada* (=Onomastica, 22) (Winnipeg, 1961), pp. 14–15.
⁴ Cf. Einar Haugen, *Bilingualism in the Americas: A bibliography and Research guide* (=Publications of the American Dialect Society, No. 26) (1956), pp. 50–51.
⁵ Cf. Ziłyński, *l.c.*

from the standard Ukrainian in Europe[6] and it might lead to a similar development as that of American English, French Canadian, a.o. unless the standard orthoepy is restituted on the Canadian soil. The growth of communication, as well as the development of the language culture in the new country will lead inevitably to the conformity with the Ukrainian standard speech in Europe.

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[6] Cf. Jurij Šerech, "The language of Ukrainian emigrants in Germany", *S'ohočasne j mynule*, 1-2 (München, 1949), pp. 44-45.