

# ATTRIBUTION OF RUSSIAN LITERARY PARAPHONETICS

Zh.V.GANIYEV

MOSCOW STATE PEDAGOGIC INSTITUTE  
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES, USSR, 119034

## ABSTRACT

What remains in the significant after the language-specific information is "taken away" - viz types and number of gap fillers, prolongation of vowels and consonants, unusual vowel variations at the end of sense-groups, non-linguistic pauses etc. - functions in conformity with the general norms of human behaviour as part of language etiquette.

## INTRODUCTION

A full description of text phonetics includes, apart from the positional realization of phonemes and prosodic means, a specific "remainder" which means types and number of non-linguistic speech gap fillers, prolongation and distinctive segment variations at the end of speech segments etc. At the level of phonetics a linguistic message is accompanied by parentheses and non-linguistic segment variations (paraphonetic means). An investigation of reading and unprepared speech (an interview and text rendering, 10 hours of taped materials in total) has shown that the Russian literary language speakers, examined in the experiment used in their unprepared speech

from 15 to 20 different paraphoneticisms per minute. In reading this figure is 8-10 times less. Paraphoneticisms are as if attached to the end of speech segments and are, therefore, of supersegmental nature, even though they do not accompany phonemes as tone or intensity do. Like social and situational variations of explicative means, paraphonetic phenomena are never rigidly determined by stratification and/or situational factors. Yet, one may speak of a certain regular correspondence and subsequently of a sociolinguistic value of probability correlations, as applied to paraphonetic phenomena.

## PARENTHESES

a) We observe introduction of er sounds (referred as er'ing later on in the paper) in all types of unprepared speech as a sign of reflection (hesitation) in a certain emotional state which can range from emotional strain to neglect of the situation. In the overwhelming majority of cases these sounds are of incomplete formation and are considerably less intense than linguistic sounds. (This is additionally indicated with round brackets). Not any er'ing strikes one's ears with one and the same effect. There are moderate types and there are "monstrous" types which can be heard right away and are unpleasant (Cf. [(ə), (m:) and [ə:üə:mn'i], [ə:ufə:m]. Naturally enough first types are more frequent). Er'ing also depends on the func-

tional state of the examinees. They had different attitudes towards their interviewers and the experiment itself since their social experience made them assess differently one and the same situation even though the experiment took place in surroundings quite usual for them, i.e. they were interviewed at the plant, in the theatre or in the college where the informants work or study. Moreover no-one of them had not met the interviewer before. One part of them who were young workers from Moscow enterprises were somewhat embarrassed in their speech behaviour, taking the interview as something unusual. By intuition they tried to improve the aestheticism of their speech and er'ed in answering questions and rendering the text far less frequently than those who were more at ease, i.e. students and actors.

Students proved to be more at ease of them all: their noticeable unpleasant er'ing accounts for 40 per cent of all parentheses. In actors and young workers moderate and hardly noticeable er'ing accounts for two thirds of all parentheses. It is probable that part of the non-too-pleasant-for-ear er'ing was controlled by the speaker. He as if shifted off his responsibility for his unpleasant mumbling onto the interviewer, as if saying: You ask me a question and I ponder and search. You can see that, so just have patience. Maybe in different, less nervous surroundings, when they had no strict necessity to follow the thread of the interview their er'ing would be more moderate in terms of quality and quantity.

b) Prolongation of vowels (final vowels mostly) is a phenomenon similar to er'ing. Prolongation of consonants is somewhat further from er'ing as vocal phenomenon since also voiceless consonants can be prolonged. Prolongation of vowels is observed most often in the conjunctions ЧТО, М, parasite words НУ, БОТ, in certain prepo-

sitions and the particle ЭТО. Sometimes it is also observed in personal pronouns. Prolongation of speech-sounds is observed in the unprepared speech roughly as often as er'ing (100 times an hour). Vowels are prolonged 4 times more often than consonants. At any rate, correlation between the number of cases of er'ing and the prolongation of speech-sounds in individual informants proved to be inversely proportional: those who abused of er'ing used prolongation less frequently whereas those who er'ed less often and unnoticeably prolonged speech-sounds more frequently.

c, d) Physiologically the phenomena of the breath and voiceless explosion of vocal cords are similar to prolongation of consonants. The breath is held subconsciously when speech sounds are on the verge to appear and the stage of control selection of speech units is not yet finished. Cord explosions are due to similar reasons. Six hours of unprepared speech yielded 70 cases of breath holding phenomenon. This phenomenon is practically non-existent in the speech of those who are used to answer questions and to solve speech problems. Naturally enough, best of all these requirements are met by students. As to the voiceless explosion of cords, most cases of this phenomenon are observed in those who have a habit to hold breath.

e) Noisy sighs when inhaling or exhaling, similar to noticeable er'ing, are out of place and indestrable in the context of official surroundings. The experiment has shown that er'ing and noisy sighs have a statistical correlation: when choosing the next words in unprepared speech young workers produced noisy sighs twice less frequently as students and actors did.

f) When the front of the tongue comes unstuck from the hard palate and the sides of the tongue come unstuck of the cheeks they produce smacking which fills the

pause necessary to ponder over a phrase. Besides this, smacking typical of a tired reader when he starts a new paragraph. Smacking, if audible, is just as unpleasant as mumbling. Smacking can mean both neglect towards interlocutor or disappointment with the subject of the discussion. Actors use smacking to create an image of uncultured Philistine. At the last stage of the experiment after 40-45 minutes of work the informants were asked to read aloud two texts (one of them jocular, as if produced by this very Philistine and the other, a serious one where the informant imitates a new announcer). The informants were getting tired as they were reading the second text after the first one. This was evidenced by the number of smacking in the students and workers, but not the actors. Those actors who use smacking to make the speech more colourful smacked practically in the jocular text every time they took the breath. Reading the announcer text none of them smacked at all. And yet, unprepared speech of actors produced different results. Here all of them smack. The experiment has shown that students smacked more than others (twice as frequently as actors and 8-9 times as frequently as young workers).

g) Non-linguistic pauses are also known as hesitation pauses, pauses of pondering or word selection etc. Retelling a six-hundred-word text the workers had more such difficulties than young intellectuals: the workers had 50 and almost 30 per cent more of non-linguistic pauses if compared with the actors and students respectively. If it is reasonable that in conformity with official etiquette a silent pause (er'ing for example), then this etiquette was more strictly observed by the young workers. The number of their silent pauses is 8 times as great as their

er'ing. The same indices for actors and students are 2.2 and 5 times respectively.

#### VARIATIONS

Unlike parentheses, variations are not sighs of reflection, selection or hesitation. These paraphonetic phenomena are widely spread in reading and are socially determined as sighs of speech carelessness.

a) Nasalization is probably the most harmful variation for the etiquette and it is considered to be even vulgar. Nasalization does not depend on the vicinity of a nasal consonant. It is produced by air escaping simultaneously through nasal and mouth cavities (...традиционный праздник Книж<sup>н</sup>). This is caused by a careless pre-emptive lowering of the soft palate (and the tongue) before the speech segment is ended. The actors did not have any nasalization at all when reading, even though in general this phenomenon was registered 600 times in the course of the experiment. Both reading and unprepared speech of the workers account for 80 per cent of all nasalization cases. In each individual group the females nasalized pre-pause sounds 5-6 times more frequently than the males.

b) The speech organs wanting to take their neutral position pre-emptively "demobilize" post-stressed high vowels at the end of sense-groups: Ларис, а где твои нарцисс[ы]? Красивые они бы[л'ы]. Дорогие москвичи и гости столиц[ы] etc. In reading such phenomena are much less frequent than in unprepared speech (1:5). Professional young actors read without any "demobilization" at all. The students account for 10 per cent of the cases, the remaining 90 per cent are accounted by the workers. The actors account for 15 per cent of all cases of "demobilization" in unprepared speech. Students and young workers account for the remaining

30 and 65 per cent of cases respectively. Furthermore it should be mentioned that high vowels deformation is predominantly typical of females.

c) Hemming at the end of sense-groups is also another result of speech carelessness. It is produced when vocal cord continue to vibrate whereas the lips are already closed in the neutral position. 180 cases of strong and the same number of weak cases of hemming were registered in the experiment: в городе(м), девушки(м), о женитьбе(м), про [н'ивб(м)] etc. This phenomenon prevails in the females of all social groups. Also it is less marked in students and most important in workers.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The experiment was conducted with informants part of whom are actors speaking professionally stage Russian, others are Russian language students who had studied Russian orthoepy and expressive reading and still others are workers who have no special knowledge in Russian orthoepy. All the informants can be considered young people by the standards of Soviet psychology. All of them had spent their early years in Moscow (such selection allowed to prevent undesirable distortions of results). Each of the three groups consists of an equal number of informants having general secondary education at least. The groups were equally divided into males and females. The experiment has shown that parophonetics in speech is governed by the general norms of human behaviour as part of the speech etiquette. Wherever the linguistic norm is based, among other things, on aesthetic factors, viz those of taste, cultural tradition, pretige of established standards, the non-linguistic norms are somewhat similar to linguistic norms or rather to the most elementary norm of

usage.

Apparently innate, since they manifest their existence in non-linguistic functioning of the speech apparatus, paraphonetic means are, in fact, dependent on the current conventions. Reactions to them are conditioned by historically formed attitudes of the nation to specific verbal behaviour patterns.