ABSTRACT

The speech material of the Northern Russian dialects was investigated. A complex of the phonetic phenomena was found testifying to the existence of the correlation of the tense-lax consonants in those dialects. Since analogous phonetic features are observed in the Western and Southern Slavic languages, it may be suggested that the peculiarity discovered in the Northern Russian dialects is part of the pre-Indo-European heritage.

1. As we know, the consonants of Standard Russian are opposed on the basis of voicelessness-voicedness. The voiced consonants differ from the voiceless ones also by the voicelessness-voiceness. The voiced consonants are more energetic /l/. The noise constituting them is more intensive than in the voiceless ones. It should also be borne in mind that the articulatory organs.

2. So far no Russian dialects have been described where the principle of tenseness-nontenseness of consonants manifested itself differently than in Standard Russian. Such dialects are to be found on the river Mezen in the Leshukon region of the Arkhangelsk region. Our primary auditory impression was checked instrumentally when the length of consonants of these dialects was measured.

2.1. According to the data received from Blahotovskaya for Standard Russian the length of voiceless fricative consonants in the intervocalic position can vary within the range of 167 mc to 213 mc. The voiceless consonants show a variation from 93 mc to 127 mc. The ratio of the length of voiced consonants to that of the voiceless ones is approximately 0.5-0.66 /p/. 57/. A feature of voiceless and voiced fricative consonants in the intervocalic position is that they differ from that in the literary language. The difference is a greater contrast in their length. Thus the length of intervocalic consonants varies within the range of 95-100 mc while in the same position the interval characterized by the length of 45-59 mc; the temporal characteristic of intervocalic consonants is from 110 to 180 mc, and those of [t] from 30 to 60 mc. The ratio of the length of voiced consonants to that of the voiceless ones in the Mezen dialects is shorter, which is 0.46 or 0.48 /p/. 57/.

2.1.1. An even greater difference between the length of voiced and voiceless consonants can be observed in the stops which are longer in the Mezen dialects. The length of the feature differs from language to language. In some languages these consonants have a longer phase of contact, which results in geminates. Estimations of the English, German, and the exclusive consonants have a longer postexplosive phase leading to aspirated consonants.

2.1.2. Both types of prolonging of the voiceless consonant in the Mezen dialects. Thus sometimes the voiceless consonants are pronounced with a long contact /a P'stn, c'st, p'o, p'o, o'/, but more often the length of the voiceless stop /p, t, k/ is 0.46-0.57. In an exception: [phon'or, nap'hal, 'naphol, tham, th'or, phon'ico lo, a'ho, a'ho, a'he-ro', ku'pit'a, 'n'ep'ha, mats'dhi, mury'kh].

In Standard Russian the length of postexplosive phase of the voiceless stops /p, t, k/ in the intervocalic position varies from 153 to 200 mc /p. 57/ while the postexplosive phase of /b, d, g/ is equal to 0.1 of the length of the whole consonant and that of /t, d/ to 0.17-0.25. According to our data the duration of the postexplosive phase of /g/ in the Mezen dialects is 42-95 mc, that of /t/ is 62-70 mc, and that of /k/ is 54-76 mc. The measurement of their relative length showed that the postexplosive phase of these consonants can constitute from 0.4 to 0.7 of the entire length of the consonant.

2.2.1. One can also see the difference between Standard Russian and the Mezen dialects in the proportion of the consonant lengths in clusters.

In Standard Russian the first consonant of the cluster is the more tense, and the second one /p, t, k/ is the more lax /p. 59/. This regularity is proved by the results of measurements of the consonant lengths in such groups as [ka], [k], [k], [k], [k], [k], [k], [k], [k]. In the Mezen dialects the first consonant is the more tense, and the second one /k, t, p/ is the more lax. This difference is a law in Standard Russian according to which the first consonant in the cluster represents the tenseness-nontenseness of the phonetic phenomena: the long consonant loses its length when it occurs beside another consonant; compare: [k], [k], [k]. One can also see the difference between the Mezen dialects and Standard Russian.

2.2.2. Another peculiarity of the Mezen dialects is the direct establishment of the level of tenseness. However, the articulatory organs.

2.3. The prolonged consonants in the Mezen dialects depend on the force of the position after the voiceless consonant in the Mezen dialects. The stronger the second position is, the longer the voiceless consonants.

3. As we know, the consonants of Standard Russian are opposed on the basis of voicelessness-voicedness. The voiced consonants differ from the voiceless ones also by the voicelessness-voiceness. The voiced consonants are more energetic /l/. The noise constituting them is more intensive than in the voiceless ones.
ament of the intensity at the end of a sentence weakens the end of the consonant as well as the strength of the context is greater than the strength of the explosion and the explosion does not take place.

The voiced consonants in the Mezen dialects are lax. They are much shorter than their voiceless correlates. Besides non-

ten-ness of the consonants discussed above see also the pronunciation of voiced consonants in place of the voiceless ones: 'star' in ga, 

[g < k], po'umat' (t - d), po'rajo, za'ga-

dyurj


2. Implosive consonants, spirantization of voiced explosive consonants, intercha-

nge of voiced consonants and voiceless ones and the existence of semivoiced con-

sonants have been noticed in different Northern Russian dialects by other dialecto-


clogists. The auditioning of the tapes of the Mezen dialects which have been described above.

3. All this testifies to the fact that in the Northern Russian dialects there exists opposition of tense-ness/ent-ness, but not on-ness/no-voice-ness as is the case in other Russian dialects and the literary language.

When making phonological conclusions some phoneticians proceed from the principle of phoneme neutralization /3/7, however the fact of neutralization as such cannot always clarify the nature of the phonetic op-

position. Thus for example the contrast of the voiceless stops occurs at the beg-

nition of the voiceless stops. Yet in one of these tapes we find the most typical feature of the Mezen dialects - ex-

2.5. Implosive consonants, spirantization of voiced explosive consonants, interchanges of voiced consonants and voiceless ones and the existence of semivoc.

i-ness of the consonants discussed above see also the pronunciation of voiced consonants in place of the voiceless ones: 'star'in ga, 

[g < k], po'umat' (t - d), po'rajo, za'ga-

Consequently the discussed features of the Northern Russian phenomenon - the opposition of the consonants on tense-ness/ent-ness, may be one more feature linking the Northern Russian dialects with the Slavic West. This feature may be praiseworthy.

References

/1/ R. V. Banov, G. V. Kant, M. Valette. Vvede-

nie v analiz rечи. Различительные признаки и их корреляты. Гл. 3. Чтение описывающих различительных признаков, - В кн.: Новок и лингвистика, вып. 1, М., 1962.

/2/ Л. Г. Лазотов, Фонетическая реализация консонантных противоположений в русском языке, M., 1960.

/3/ Л. В. Лазарев, Фонетическая структура слова в тетох речи. Казань, 1962.


Many of the described phenomena are known in the Slavic languages. According to our data (p, t, k) in Polish are more tense than in Russian. The voiceless stops are aspirated in the modern and Southern Slavic languages /10/. For Czech the relevance of the opposition on the "tense-ness" of the consonants was discussed /11/. Consequently the discussed features of the Northern Russian dialects connected with the opposition of the consonants on tense-ness/ent-ness, may be one more feature linking the Northern Russian dialects with the Slavic West. This feature may be praiseworthy.