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## ON THE NUMBER OF PHONEMES IN CONTEMPORARY UDMURT

It is traditionally considered that there are 36 phonemes in contemporary Udmurt: 7 vowels and 29 consonants. The number of phonemes however, is not always constant. So, for instance, in the system of Udmurt phonemes such consonants as /j, ʒ, c/ did not exist. Their appearance in contemporary Udmurt was promoted by a great number of borrowings from the Russian language. Since the innovations demanded changes in traditional articulation, much time passed before these consonants became completely Udmurt. Usually the consonants that came into Udmurt with borrowed words were replaced by Udmurt consonants whose articulation was similar to /j, ʒ, c/. The older generation, for instance, still pronounces *сакар* instead of *сахар*, *Педор* instead of *Фёдор*, *целый* instead of *целый*.

Nowadays, owing to the prevalence of radio, TV and cinema among the Udmurt population, the penetration of borrowed words from the Russian language is still continuing. The Udmurts, as a rule, have no difficulties in the perception and pronunciation of these words. In those cases when borrowed words contain palatalized forelingual consonants /t', d', l', n', s', z'/ these consonants are replaced by those Udmurt palatal consonants that are close to them from the point of view of articulation and acoustics. There is a forward displacement in the pronunciation of these consonants, that is, they become more similar to Russian palatalized consonants. Thus, it is not difficult for the Udmurts to replace forelingual palatalized Russian consonants by Udmurt palatal consonants in borrowed words.

At the same time borrowed words include in their composition labial and backlingual palatalized consonants such as /p', b', f', v', m', k', g', ʒ'/ and the forelingual palatalized sonorant /r/. As was mentioned above there are no independent palatalized consonants in contemporary Udmurt. But the Udmurts easily pronounced them because all hard labial and forelingual Udmurt consonants have palatalized variants (allophones) in a position before the vowels /i, e/. This opinion is also adhered to by the authors of «Grammar of contemporary Udmurt» (see Грамматика 1962 : 24).

On the basis of what has been said we can put the main question this way: is it possible to consider the allophones of the afore-mentioned hard phonemes independent in contemporary Udmurt? We think it is. For proof it is necessary to refer to the point of view of the well-known linguist L. R. Zinder concerning the penetration of the Russian phonemes into the national languages of the peoples of the USSR; the vocabulary of these languages has grown and is still growing with the help of the Russian language. «Russian words are pronounced in the Russian manner at least when they preserve all the phonemic differences characte-

ristic of the Russian language. In such cases there are good grounds to consider these oppositions phonemically significant. Borrowed pronunciation plays an especially important role when there are conditions for corresponding phonemic opposition in the borrowing language» (Зиндер 1979 : 67).

In reality, as mentioned above, in words borrowed from the Russian language there exist forelingual palatalized consonants which in Udmurt are being replaced by palatal ones.

As for labials, sonorant /r/ and backlinguals, these consonants have palatalized allophones in traditionally Udmurt words, for instance, *кин, берен, вир, чибинь, гид, чиней*, etc. That is why the penetration of a great number of Russian words into Udmurt creates a favourable situation for the appearance of palatalized labials, sonorant /r/ and backlingual consonants as independent phonemes. Borrowed words are quite numerous in contemporary Udmurt. The majority of scientific, technical and social-political terms consist of Russian borrowings which are part of an international lexicon. Depending on the subject-matter context the borrowed words in Udmurt make up between 10—30 per cent of the vocabulary. In oral speech (especially in the speech of the younger generation) the number and frequency of Russian and international words are much greater than in the written language (Вахрушев 1976 : 42).

It is important to keep in mind that «... when determining the system of phonemes it is necessary to take into consideration the whole vocabulary of a given language including the so-called foreign or borrowed words; it is these words that often are instructive because they reveal the phonemic possibilities of a borrowing language» (Зиндер 1979 : 66).

As for our opinion, nowadays, it is possible to state with confidence that the quantitative make-up of phonemes in contemporary Udmurt has grown larger owing to the adoption of palatalized labials /p', b', f', v', m'/, forelingual sonorant /r/ and backlinguals /k', g', x'/. Ignoring such facts would lead to a situation where it would be possible not to notice changes taking place in the system of phonemes of this or that language.

In conclusion it ought to be said that the palatalized consonants /p', b', f', v', m', r, k', g', x'/ which became independent in Udmurt have been added to the system of phonemes. That is why it should be recognized that the total number of phonemes in contemporary Udmurt is 45 : 7 vowels and 38 consonants.

#### LITERATURE

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#### О КОЛИЧЕСТВЕ ФОНЕМ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ УДМУРТСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Считается, что в современном удмуртском языке 36 фонем: 7 гласных и 29 согласных. Однако известно, что фонемный состав того или иного языка не может оставаться неизменным. Так, ранее в системе согласных удмуртского языка отсутствовали фонемы *f, x, c*. С появлением заимствований из русского языка они стали полноправными единицами фонетической системы удмуртского языка. В настоящее время число заимствований из русского языка значительно увеличилось, в системе фонем современного удмуртского языка появились такие согласные, как *ř, b', f', v, m', r, k' g', x'*, пришедшие в составе заимствований. Автор считает, что в удмуртском языке количество фонем равно 45: 7 гласных и 36 согласных.