

Historical Aspects of Yakut Dialects. The Process of Consonant Assimilation

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Numerous changes have occurred during the historical development of the sound system of Yakut dialects from the Common Turkic prototype. Various Yakut dialects reflect archaisms, while others naturally constitute innovations. The progressive and regressive assimilation of consonantal features ('consonant harmony') seen in virtually all modern Turkic languages is most pronounced in Yakut dialects.

Assimilation and dissimilation consonant sounds are related to types of combinatorial changes. And as with other members of the Turkic family, consonant harmony, both progressive and regressive, is one of the major characteristics of Yakut dialects. This article presents the data from Yakut consonant harmony.

Yakut has moved furthest away from the Common Turkic prototype with respect to consonant harmony. Often geminates are the end-result of the assimilatory processes that have been active through the development of Yakut; likewise, this process has continued throughout the development of various dialects, e.g. Amginsk region *otto* for *orto* 'center', etc. Note that this gemination strategy for cluster simplification is even observable on the individual speaker level, i.e. the processes remain active idiolectally. For example, in the Yakut spoken in the Vekhojansk region, unmotivated medial gemination is frequently encountered: *miexxe* 'me.DAT', *ulaxxan* 'big' or *ooččo* 'boat'.

Of all the Turkic languages, consonant harmony processes have undergone the most extensive development in Yakut. The features that harmonize in modern Yakut are [nasal], [coronal], [anterior], [lateral], [voice], and [high]. Throughout the history of Yakut, clusters of consonants have assimilated various features, frequently resulting in a geminate consonant; this process is still observable on the level of dialect or "govor", or even in individual speaker pronunciation.

Ubrjatova notes that "Consonant assimilation in stem varies from dialect to dialect. Therefore it may be considered as the main dialectal feature" [3]. In fact, this phenomenon takes up considerable place among studies on Yakut dialects. There was collected sufficient data in order to gain an understanding of the development of this process. More general description of the process on the level of historical dialectology was made in work of S.A. Ivanov [2].

Regressive assimilation as devoicing of voiced consonants followed by voiceless illustrated in detail by N.D. D'jachkovskij [1]. He emphasizes the progressive development of this phenomenon: "Tendencies towards assimilation of sonorants before voiceless are so strong in modern Yakut language, that they are often cannot be regulated".

Thus, consonant assimilation both contact and distant in Yakut language is relatively new phenomenon. Assimilation of consonants is one of the characteristics that indicate the development of a language on the way of its improvement and perfection. From this point of view, the areas where the assimilation did not develop are considered as conservative.

The analysis of Yakut language on the dialectological level brings clearly out that consonant combinations -rt and -lt in final position lose their first components -r- and -l- when pronounced in the dialects, where the regressive assimilation is more developed. Theoretically here takes place the same process of assimilation but in the word final position. Appeared at the end of

the word geminated consonant virtually shortens. But in the dialects where this assimilation is not developed, final combinations -rt and -lt are pronounced without qualitative loss.

What refers to the final combinations -mp and -k, their pronunciation does not give a distinct isoglottic line. This can be concerned with the fact that they as the new formations are on the stage of forming and vary from region to region.

The distant consonant assimilation can be realized in form of nasalization. Nowadays nasalized variants are used very often, and even prevail in some Yakut dialects, although, there is a standard variant, which agrees with the initial form.

Источники и литература

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