

## **Marginalised by scholars? – The question of loan phonemes and vowel harmony in the Permian dialects**

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The dialectal monographies of the Komi languages since the 1950s have presented us phonological descriptions, that often include loan phonemes such as [f], [x], [ʃ], and more in some cases (see for example Igushev 1973; Zhilina 1975; Batalova 1990: 21 etc.). These phonemes occur also in the vocabularies of the given dialect through lexical examples. To some extent, descriptions of Udmurt dialects feature some of these borrowed sounds as well (see Csúcs 2002; Kelmakov 2003). In my presentation, I am aiming to raise questions, to give an overview on marginal sounds (both consonants and vowels) of the Permian dialects based on earlier studies by Permian dialectologists.

Based on chapters of my dissertation, I take a fresh look at the literature and collected data of Permianisms from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Regarding [f], [x], [ʃ], not each of the Permian dialects retain these borrowed phonemes – replacing them with [p], [k], [ʃ] ~ [ʃ] ~ [s] respectively –, but many of them have adapted these new sounds into their phonological inventory via loanwords. According to Vászolyi (1964: 25–27), the Kanin Zyrian dialect has glottal fricative [h], which makes it the only Permian dialect to have such a phoneme in its sound inventory.

The Izhma Zyrian, the Upper Sysola Zyrian, and the Zyuzdino Permyak dialect even incorporated [x] to a level, where this velar fricative replaces original [k] in Russian loanwords (Igushev 1973: 12; Sakharova–Selkov 1976: 24–25; Zhilina 1975: 55; Sazhina 2016: 244). A similar process is visible when original [p] is replaced by [f] in a few Russian loanwords in Izhma Zyrian, Luza-Letka Zyrian (Igushev 1973: 7, 13; Sakharova–Selkov 1976: 23; Zhilina 1985: 16), and On Permyak.

The second issue is the question of vowel harmony that has been neglected (or stated as non-existing) mostly for Komi dialects. As Sorvachova–Sakharova–Gulyayev have described, vowels in the Upper Vychegda Zyrian have a palatal equivalent when neighbouring palatal consonants (1966: 12–13, 22), but they do not provide further information about the quality of these palatal vowels, only showing them in a few given examples (rendering them as *á, ó, ý, é, ó, ú, ú*). They also conclude that these allophones are not important, thus they retain from marking them in their assembled vocabulary. In addition to the Upper Vychegda dialect, a rather similar but more regulated rule applies for the central subdialect of Pechora Zyrian, where vowels can have a palatal allophone based on the vicinity of palatal consonants. Furthermore,

the central vowels (ə, ʊ) are only present in words that contain front vowels (Sakharova–Selkov–Kolegova 1976: 8–9).

In my study I argue that these vowel rules can be seen as a form of vowel harmony based on backness (for the general picture of Uralic vowel harmony see Fejes 2022). Regarding the origin of this vowel system, I aim to suggest two possible origins: 1) a relict of the long-lost vowel harmony of (?Pre-)Proto-Permian or 2) a possible substrate from an Ob-Ugric language (as these dialectal areas correspond with Ob-Ugric hydronyms and other place names). These questions are yet to be answered as we have insufficient data from these dialects, and only the two monographies are reliable sources on these phenomena.

When assembling the sound inventory (including phonemes and allophones) of the Permian dialects, we might have to reevaluate the status of these borrowed sounds as they have become more prevalent and irreplaceable in most of Komi and Udmurt dialects, i.e. the previously attested and described phonetic replacement of the loan sounds does not occur anymore even at the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Further observation and field research would be necessary to measure the current tendencies of dialectal speakers when it comes to the use of such loan phonemes and the presence of any form of vowel harmony in the two given Zyrian dialects.

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