

KORYŎMAL – FACTORS OF CREATION

Linda Stöckelová
Prague, Czech Republic

Название статьи: Корёмаль – факторы формирования

Автор: Штокелова Линда, CharlesUniversity, Prague, Czech Republic

Резюме: Данная статья посвящена проблемам корейского меньшинства в Республике Казахстан, а также диалекту Коре мар в Центральной Азии. Целью данной статьи является описание основных факторов, приведших к созданию уникального диалекта Коре мар, и выявление отличий этого диалекта от сеульского стандарта корейского языка. В статье дается краткое описание влияния диалекта провинции Хамген, русского и казахского языков на Коре мар. Статья призвана подчеркнуть важность научных исследований в этой области, а также определить перспективы развития Коре мар.

Ключевые слова: Коре мар, Коре сарам, диаспора, диалект

Keywords: Koryŏmal, Koryŏsaram, Diaspora, Dialect

There are roughly 370 000 ethnic Koreans living in the territory of Central Asia, most of them in Uzbekistan (198 000) and Kazakhstan (105 000). It is 4th largest Korean minority in the world after China, USA and Japan, and it is 28th largest ethnic group in the former Soviet Union. In Kazakhstan are Koreans 8th largest ethnic group. These people are usually called Koryŏsaram (고려사람) and their history dates back to the year 1863, when first of them came to the land of Russian Far East. In 1937 were Koryŏsaram forcibly moved from the Russian Far East to Central Asia, therefore nowadays, there is growing up third generation (in some cases even fourth) of Koryŏsaram born on the land of Kazakhstan. It is possible to say, that since that time until the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, there has been no contact between them and their ethnic relatives on Korean Peninsula. More than 50 years of isolation, led to creation of their own specific culture, lifestyle, habits, food and also language. This paper aims to describe reasons of distinction between this language, usually called as Koryŏmal (고려말), and standard Seoul Korean.

Simply we can say, that distinctive features of Koryŏmal were formed by four factors. Firstly, Koryŏmal is different from standard Seoul Korean because of its origin. Ancestors of present Koryŏsaram mostly came from Northern Hamgyŏng Province (함경북도), where people use very specific dialect. This dialect belongs to the northeast dialect group (동부방언지역) and it is one of dialects which differs the most from the standard Seoul Korean as we know it nowadays. Moreover, ancestors of Koryŏsaram escaped from Korea before establishing of standard spelling, which was based on the Seoul dialect. Compare to Standard Seoul Korean shows the Northern Hamgyŏng dialect many distinctive features in spelling, pronunciation and grammar. For further studies, there is possible to use the <Dictionary of the Northern Hamgyŏng dialect>(함북방언사전, Hambuk pangŏn sajŏn, 1986) compiled by Korean linguist Kim Tchŏ-gyun (김태균) or see related works of linguists Kim Hyŏn-gyu (김현규), Allan Ramsay or Ross King.

Another factor, which affected Koryŏmal, is russification. Russian language started to influence Koryŏmal since the first inhabitation of the Russian Far East by Korean people in the second half of 19th century. At the beginning, it was possible to find Russian words mostly in the political, scientific and technical terminology. Nowadays, we can find huge amount of Russian loanwords also in the everyday speech. It is definitely not easy to sum up the Russian influence on Koryŏmal, mainly because of the fact, that way of use of Koryŏmal depends on socio-cultural factors like age, occupation, region, level of education, etc. Use of Koryŏmal by elderly person, who is using this language every day will be very different from the way of speech of a young person, whose spouse is for instance Russian and whose level of Koryŏmal is only passive. So, it is almost impossible to find two people speaking the same way. But in general, we can say, that nowadays, when Koryŏsaram talk together in Koryŏmal, they will use Korean word order and grammar, but add for instance Russian conjunctions like <и> [i] (and), <а> [a] (but) or hybrid words like <люби 하다> [liubihada] (like) or <строй 하다> [stroihada] (build). As well as there will be commonly used Russian words like for instance <базар> [Bazar] (market), <машина> [mashina] (car), <автобус> [avtobus] (bus), <насос> [nasos] (pump) etc. In the past, there was also possible to see another phenomenon, Korean words used in Russian speech, for example <그런데> [Kŏrŏnde] (by the way), <오늘> [onŭl] (today).

<왜> [Wä] (why) etc. However, when I was talking to Koryǒsaram in Russian, I didn't notice such a trend. For the future, no significant increase or decrease of Russian influence on Koryǒmal is expected.

Let me mention one more reason of difference, and that is the influence of the local turkic languages, if we speak specifically about the case of Kazakhstan, it is mostly Kazakh. Koryǒsaram generally took up from Kazakh language expressions describing specific cultural elements, such as names of meals (for example bishbarmak or ayran), special pieces of clothing, etc. On the other hand, Kazakh adopt some expression from Korean describing typical Korean cultural elements, such as kimchi (김치), kuksi (국시), etc. On the contrary of perfekt command of Russian language, not so many Koryǒsaram speak fluent Kazakh, however it is interesting to notice, that in some cities in Southern Kazakhstan (like Kyzylorda or Taraz) number of Kazakh speaking Koreans is significantly growing.

There exists, in my opinion, one more reason of distinction between Koryǒmal and standard Seoul Korean, and it has connection with the reason I mentioned at the first place. Standard Seoul Korean was established after Koryǒsaram left Korean Peninsula and of course didn't stay the same till present days. Korean is, as any other language, constantly developing and adapting to the changing socio-cultural environment. In standard Seoul Korean are nowadays used many Sinokorean expressions, which came to be used in Korean speech during the 20th century, so they does not exist in Koryǒmal. Besides, there has been remarkable American influence on South Korea, which started in the 90s of 20th century and nowadays seems to be constantly growing. This American cultural influence led to use of many English expresions in every day Korean, and also these expressions are unknown to Koryǒsaram.

I have been researching in Kazakhstan for more than one month, and during this time I have met many Koryǒsaram, especially your generation, who claims not to have any command of Koryǒmal. They often told me, that even though their parents can speak Koryǒmal, they use only Russian language even for communication among their family. And most of them also showed no interest in learning Koryǒmal. However, there shoul'd be mentioned the big fashion of learning the standard Seoul Korean among the young Koryǒsaram. This tendency we can notice since the year 1989 and perestroika, when, because of a certain liberation among the whole Soviet Union, all the ethnic groups showed remarkable renewal of interest and pride in their ethnic and

national question. Koryŏsaram were not exception and they were eager to establish ties with their ethnic relatives on the Korean Peninsula. Recently, there has been a lot of discussion, whether this is an attempt to revive and maintain their lost mother language or just learning one more foreign language. In this difficult question, I agree with Ross King, that, because of the big difference between these two dialects, learning Seoul Korean cannot be seen as reviving of language tradition, but simply as learning a new foreign language. It is an understandable choice, if we consider the growing economic influence of South Korea as well as the sudden interest about Korean culture not only in the neighbouring states in Asia, but also in North America and Europe.

Koryŏmal is extremely interesting subject to study and this linguistics phenomenon drives attention of linguist and scholars all around the world. Nowadays it is probably the last chance to conduct field research and speak to original speakers of Koryŏmal. In my opinion, such research is important not only for scholars, but also for Koryŏsaram themselves, because it is an instrument of preservation of this dialect for next generations. Koryŏmal is mostly spoken language, with lack of written sources. Of course, there are also short stories, novels and newspaper, such as Lenin Kichi (레닌 기치) or Koryŏ Ilbo (고려 일보), written by Koryŏsaram in Korean, however, non of them in Koryŏmal, but in Pyŏngyang standard or Seoul standard (case of Koryŏ Ilbo). Therefore, if Koryŏmal is not recorded and studied, it could be lost for next generations, which can be later very regretted. However, conducting such a research is not an easy thing, especially for western scholar. It is demanding on language abilities, such researcher must have some certain ability in both Korean and Russian. It also requires a lot of time and it is also demanding on financial fundings. There already has been some researches conducted by western scholars on the topic of Koryŏmal, but in my opinion, there is still space for new researchers in this area.

Conclusion

It is very hard to sum up contemporary situation of Koryŏmal in Kazakhstan. According to the age, level of education, occupation and other factors, use of Koryŏmal as well as amount of Russian expressions could be very different. Linguists studying Koryŏmal agree on one statement: Unfortunately, use of Koryŏmal among the Korean minority in Kazakhstan will be constantly decreasing and seems not to

survive this generation of native speakers. Koryŏmal is mostly used as spoken language and there doesn't exist many written sources, therefore it is directly connected to the speakers. Young Koryŏsaram will be either fluent just in Russian, or they will learn the standard Seoul Korean. As I mentioned above, it is probably an understandable choice, however a choice, which later can be regretted. At this point, it is important to conduct valuable research among the original speakers as well as it is necessary to try to record Koryŏmal in written or audio form. Recording of Koryŏmal is probably the only way how we can preserve this unique dialect for the next generations of linguists and Koryŏsaram themselves.