Kimchi or Chimchi

Korean dialects in contact and Russianization of Korean loanwords in Sakhalin

This paper presents the first-ever study on Korean dialect and language contact on Sakhalin Island, Russia. Korean speech communities in Sakhalin consist of (a) those who were deported as manual labourers by Japan, which annexed Korea and governed Sakhalin as her territory from 1905 to 1945; (b) those who were displaced from the border between Korea and Russia (firstly to Central Asia by Stalin and then to Sakhalin after the war); (c) indentured laborers from North Korea; and (d) recent expats and their family moving for business reasons from South Korea. Currently, more than 5% of the population in Sakhalin is ethnically Korean.

Previous studies on Sakhalin examined either Japanese language (Asahi 2011) or contact between Japanese and Korean languages (Kim 2008). However, there are as yet no studies that focus explicitly on (a) Korean dialect contact and (b) nativisation of Korean and Japanese loanwords into Russian in Sakhalin.

Our pilot study on the basis of questionnaire survey collected from over 250 Sakhaliners identified 92 Japanese and 177 Korean loanwords currently in use in the local Russian variety, demonstrating (a) distinctive characteristics of a Russian variety spoken in Sakhalin (given that most of these loanwords are not used in Standard Russian); providing some evidence of (b) dialectal influences from Korean and Japanese and (c) nativisation of these loanwords into Russian.

This paper reports some of the preliminary findings from our follow-up fieldwork conducted in Sakhalin this year. Recordings of spontaneous speech and the reading aloud of a wordlist as well as sociodemography on where they (or their ancestors) originate from and when they settled in Sakhalin, were collected from different generations of Korean, Russian and the indigenous residents. Our data together with the Korean dialect atlas complied during the 1940s are examined in order to test the applicability of the founder principle (Mufwene 1996) and koineization (Trudgill 1987, 2004, Britain 2018). This paper concludes with an emphasis of the importance of taking into consideration where people migrated from, in what numbers, and what dialects they brought with them, as well as other languages in competition in a new settlement.