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THE SWABIAN DIALECT IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE ISLAND IN RUSSIA

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Abstract

The article describes the changes in the phonetic system of German dialects in conditions of multifold migrations of German settlers around Russia that have taken place since the beginning of the XX century. As a result of dialect mixing, one can observe the process of development of new regional variants. The description is based on the dynamics of changes in Swabian dialects, since they are represented in various regions of Russia and have been exposed to the most significant influence from other dialect groups which are more numerous. The article describes the migration of the Swabian German speakers deported in the early 40s and the development of regiolects based on the Swabian dialect in Russia and Kazakhstan. The empirical material of the study are the lexical items containing Swabian diphthongs from various regions of Russia and the CIS states, as well as from modern German dictionaries and reference books.

Keywords

Language island – Dialect – Regiolect – Diphthong – Interference

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Introduction

The first German immigrants in the south of the Russian Empire were mainly from the southern regions of Germany and the north and south-west of Baden-Württemberg, speaking Swabian and South Franconian dialects. They settled in the Republic of Moldova, Odessa and Nikolaev regions and in Crimea: Simferopol, Feodosia, and Sudak regions. As a result of this immigration, new forms of the language appeared; they were defined by Žirmunskij as Franco-Swabian mixed dialects¹. They can be considered as kinds of the language that differ from the German regional dialects in the way they originated. The process of linguistic dynamics (Sprachdynamik), i.e., an impact on the constantly changing language system², is responsible for the development of regional dialects in the German-speaking world. A language island lacks this language system. A language island is usually based on one or several dialects that affect each other bringing about dialect interference. The language variants that appear as a result of these interference processes can be considered as regiolects developed within the German language island.

In the 40s of the last century, the process of regiolect development was interrupted. The tragic events of that historic period resulted in the disruption of the linguistic situation that had shaped over the years of Germans' immigration to Russia. Deportation of German settlers was hasty, and no one paid any attention to cultural, religious, and linguistic ties of different communities of the German settlers. As a result of the forced relocation and repeated changes of residence, dialect started to interact in a different way so that a basis for the development of new regiolects with a broader, than just historical, foundation appeared. It is often almost impossible to trace the routes of the Germans' migration from specific settlements. In fact, it is not so necessary for linguistic research. Being a means of communication in communities heterogeneous by origin, the language starts the process of unification and dialect leveling. Therefore, if one intends to describe the phonetic system of a dialect, it is enough to find people who identify themselves with this dialect, no matter where they live, or find the description of their speaking practice in linguistic literature.

The end of the last and the beginning of this century saw a massive wave of immigration of Russian Germans back to their historical homeland, thus, their next language assimilation was influenced by the standard and the regional language of their new residence. In this regard, it is impossible to obtain a representative corpus of audio recordings to do the acoustic analysis. Therefore, the material analyzed in the study is the phonetic scripts of oral speech and word lists from various sources which have the confirmed data concerning the place where they were recorded and the sociolinguistic background of the speakers. They can be texts and word lists from various reference books, dictionaries, articles, etc. The only problem with the use of such scripts or records is that there are no sound-letter correspondence rules, because they were not recorded in accordance with the modern spelling standards. It mostly refers to vowels, since variation in consonants, for example, lenization, etc., can be shown in a number of ways. In this article we use letter characters which are similar to phonetic symbols. Standard brackets [] are used only if the acoustic-articulatory features of particular sounds are precisely known. In other cases, we use angular brackets <> and the alphabet letters.

¹ V. M. Žirmunskij, *Problems of Colonial Dialectology*. Language and Literature (Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1929).

² E. J. Schmidt y J. Herrgen, *Sprachdynamik: Eine Einführung in die moderne Regionalsprachenforschung*. (Grundlagen der Germanistik (GrG) band 49) (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag GmbH, 2011).

The Swabian dialect was chosen to describe the functioning and variation of the phonetic system of a German island regiolect; it was originally spoken in some regions of southern Russia and in the Crimea, and this dialect seems to have survived the most number of merges, but at the same time, it is not well described. Besides, there are very few Swabian German speakers living in Russia and the CIS states now which makes the description of this regiolect spoken outside Germany particularly relevant. The following materials were used for the purpose of this study:

- Phonetic scripts from the database of the Laboratory for the Study of Vyatka dialects of VSHU³.
- Lists of words and phrases in Franconian and Swabian dialects spoken in Russian dialect islands from⁴.
- The lists of lexical items from the work by Egemberdieva devoted to the description of the Swabian dialect of the Germans who lived in Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, and the Pavlodar region in late XX century, and who associated themselves with the Swabian dialect⁵.
- The lists of lexical items from the material collected by Žirmunskij.
- The lists of words from the project called «Schwäbischoderfränkisch?» (Swabian or Franconian?); Heilbronn region (Landkreis Heilbronn), the northern part of Baden-Württemberg⁶.
- Phonetic transcriptions of texts in the Swabian dialect collected by Näser and from “Schwäbischschwätza” site (Speaking in Swabian)⁷.

The total number of the lexical items is 1,500.

This material allowed for investigating the changes that occurred in the Swabian dialect spoken by ethnic Germans that resulted from their forced relocation from Moldova, the south of Russia, and Crimea to the North Caucasus, and then to Siberia and Kazakhstan in the 30s and 40s of XX century. It is possible to assess these changes in terms of interaction of various dialects, primarily Swabian and Franconian dialects, within new dialect islands and German regiolects in the CIS states and compare these changes with the processes characteristic of the Swabian dialect used in its major distribution region in southern Germany.

³ O. V. Baikova, German dialect islands in the context of language interference: Monograph (Kirov: VSHU, 2009).

⁴ P. Rosenberg, Die Sprache der Deutschen in Russland (Frankfurt: Europa-Universität, 2001). Retrieved from: <https://www.kuwi.europa-uni.de/de/lehrstuhl/sw/sw1/mitarbeiter/rosenberg/russland.pdf>

⁵ G. M. Egemberdieva, “Phonetic features of the Swabian dialect. Bulletin of KazNU”, Philological Series Vol: 4-5 num 128-129 (2010): 53-59.

⁶ H. Maier, Schwäbisch oder fränkisch? Mundart im Raum Heilbronn. Justinus-Kerner-Gymnasium Weinsberg. Retrieved from: <http://www.projekte-regional.de/inhalt/hn/bausteine/mundart.pdf>

⁷ W. Näser, Mundartprobe: 23. Schwäbisch. Retrieved from: <https://www.staff.uni-marburg.de/~naeser/probe23.htm>

Formation of the Swabian regiolect from a diachronic perspective

It is necessary to take into consideration at least two chronological points in order to describe the development trends in the phonetic system of the Swabian regiolect in the German language island Russia:

- (a) the first half of XX century before the forced relocation of Germans started;
- (b) the end of XX century in those CIS regions where the Swabian dialect or its traces had still survived until that time, primarily Kazakhstan.

To provide a complete picture of the changes in the Swabian phonetic system of the dialect island, it is necessary to compare the obtained data with the data about the modern dialects used in Germany in early XXI century: the Swabian dialect and the South Franconian dialect, which have long been in contact in Russia.

Diphthongs are usually given special attention to in the description of the phonetic features of German dialects, including the Russian dialect islands. There are at least two reasons for this. Firstly, the formation of a system of the three modern standard German diphthongs ([ae],[ao],[Oø]) is one of the latest events in the history of German vocalism. It is associated with the Early New High German period, i.e., with the period that actually coincided with the beginning of the massive relocation of Germans from Germany to Russia. This process of formation can hardly be considered completed in all regional variants of the German language by that time. Secondly, and it is more important, diphthongs are unstable complex vowel sounds in the vowel system of any language. Their articulation is based on the glide of the organs of speech which, in fact, is characteristic of articulation of any vowel sound in speech. Vowels within the consonant environment are connected in speech with relatively stable articulation patterns of the consonant segments, so they are subjected to positional changes due to inertia of the articulation organs. It is no surprising why all transcription systems contain diacritic characters or markers the number of which is often no less than the number of characters for vowel sounds. Most of these markers are used to show the positional variation of vowels, which, due to various reasons, is not reflected in the spelling system. The glide of the speech organs when articulating vowels can be so strong that long monophthongs can be followed by shwa vowel [E], which often evolves into another sound and so we have what is called diphthongization in historical phonetics. New diphthongs disturb the balance in the system, and it inevitably leads to the opposite process – monophthongization.

Let us analyze some well-known diachronic changes in the German language from this point of view: [ia>iE>i:] – in writing: *ia>ie>i / ie / ieh* or [ua>ue>u:] (*Swabian dia*, *biag>die*, *bieg> Standard High German die*, *biegen* or *Swabian quad*, *duad*, *bruadr>gued*, *dued*, *bruedr> Standard High German gut*, *tut*, *Bruder*). Apart from purely phonetic changes, we can observe that the process of phonomorphological restructuring started by the German accent finished and it resulted in reduction of unstressed vowels. Qualitative weakening of the final component of ancient diphthongs to the shwa vowel [E] coincided with the phonomorphological restructuring, as a result the distribution of open and closed syllables was standardized, which was reflected in the spelling system. For instance, a personal pronoun, feminine, singular “sie” had the form of the nominative case “si” with a short vowel in the open syllable in the Gothic language, “sî” with a long vowel in Old German, “siu” with a diphthong in Old Saxon. The accusative case “sia” had a diphthong both in Old German and Old Saxon. The reduction weakened the unstressed component of the old German

diphthong <sia> – <sie> and resulted in apocope of the shwa sound later, thus forms “sî” “sie”>[si:] merged in Early New High German. The use of the letter “e” to show the second reduced component of a diphthong became redundant, and this letter started to show the long character of a monophthong in the open syllable, and also in syllables that had not contained a diphthong before. This process of monophthongization coincided in time with the establishment of the set of rules for vowel length conditioned by the syllable structure.

An opposite process is observed in cases where there was the long vowel [i:] in open syllables in all forms of the same word, for instance, the Subjunctive (Konjunktiv) “sî” from “sîn”. In these cases, long vowels were replaced with a wide diphthong [ae].

Thus, the setting of norms of the long and short German vowels correlates with the process of disappearance of old diphthongs and emergence of new ones. This indicates that the changes in Old German diphthongs, including Swabian diphthongs in the context of the Russian German language islands, are the result of not just simple interaction of different dialects within the language island, but also continuation of the processes launched back in the proto-Germanic era by the German accent. There are some examples of changes to the old Swabian diphthongs, for instance, the diphthong [ui]. In some cases, its reduced form [uE] has retained in the Swabian dialect up to the present time: [bruEdr,duEd] (*Bruder, tut*). However, if the reduced forms formed doublets as in the pronouns [sia, nia]>[suE,nuE]// “sie – nie”, preference was given to long monophthongs [zi:] / [ni:]. Thus, in a language island isolated from the main speech community, one can observe both the processes of systemic changes characteristic of the base dialects and also their interference.

The field studies conducted by Žirmunskij in southern Russia and Crimea revealed some evidence of convergence between Swabian German and South Franconian dialects. For example, he recorded the disappearance of some primary dialect characteristics in the Swabian dialect⁸. In particular, the Swabian diphthongs [iE,uE] were replaced with long vowels [li:b, mi:d, gu:d], i.e., they monophthongized as in other dialects geographically adjacent to it. The replacement of the Swabian diphthong [ao] with the long vowel [a:] and widening of vowels in front of [r] like in [kurts>korts>ka^orts] can be explained by the influence of the Franconian dialects as well.

Thus, analyzing the data on Swabian dialects in Russia at the beginning of XX century, it can be stated that they retained the old diphthongs [ia, ua, ui] and their reduced variants [ie, ue]. Monophthongization of old diphthongs under the influence of the neighboring South Franconian dialects had not yet become widespread in the language of the Russian Swabian speakers.

Swabian diphthongs in German island dialects in XX century

The answer to the question of the fate of the Swabian dialect in Russia is mainly hypothetical. Almost 100 years have passed since the first description of the vocal system of the Swabian dialect in southern Russia and Crimea; several generations have changed; and even then, in the 20s of the last century, the researchers were forced to question the representatives of the older generation to reconstruct certain sounds⁹. Today's older

⁸ V.M. Žirmunskij, Problems of Colonial Dialectology. Language and Literature (Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR. 1929).

⁹ V.M. Žirmunskij, Problems of Colonial Dialectology...

generation was not born yet at that time, so they are unlikely to provide any significant additional information about the origin of certain sound variants.

The field studies conducted by Žirmunskij and his scientific school provide the most complete description of the Swabian diphthongs of the beginning of XX century. Žirmunskij distinguished a number of features characteristic of any dialect which he divided into two groups according to the degree of deviation from the standard language. He defined the phonetic characteristics that deviate the most from the norm as primary, and smaller deviations were defined as secondary. At the same time Žirmunskij argued that this division cannot be of an objective nature¹⁰. It can be considered quite fair since the degree of deviation from the norm cannot be measured precisely; moreover, the norm itself is an unstable concept as it is constantly changing and developing¹¹.

Žirmunskij considered the diphthongs resulting from diphthongization of the vowels <o:, e:, iu (Y), ä> and labialization of the old diphthong [ei:]>[ae, ao, ui, äA, oe] as the primary characteristics of the Swabian dialects spoken in the south of Russia and Crimea. The old diphthongs [uo, ie, ue] and diphthongized long vowels [u:,i:]>[Eu, Ei] were regarded as secondary characteristics. The analysis of the material shows a few more diphthongs in the Swabian dialect: <ou, oi, au, ai>. The appearance of these diphthongs can be conditioned by the widening of narrow diphthongs to [ao, ae] characteristic of the modern standard language.

The analysis of various written texts in the Swabian dialect has made it possible to establish the characteristics and specifics of diphthongs' functioning in the phonetic system during XX century.

Diphthongs <ao>и <ae>

Etymologically, they are considered to be the result of diphthongization of the long vowels [o:] and [e:]. Žirmunskij gives examples of the Swabian words recorded by him: *graos*, *haoch* and *baes*, *schnae* (*groß*, *hoch*, *böse*, *Schnee*)¹². To compare, there are Old High German forms of these words: *OHG*, *MHG* *groz*, *ho(ch)*; *OHG* *bosi*>*MHG* *boese*>*NHG* *böse*; *RU* *sneg*>*OHG* *sneo*>*MHG* *sne*>*NHG* *Schnee*. These diphthongs are not recorded in the Swabian dialect in modern sources, reference books, and dictionaries: *groß* or *grauß*, not *graos*. For instance, *Greesche* (*Größe*), *Hochzich* (*Hochzeit*), *neddhoch* (*nichthoch*), *hochdeitsch*, *hauch* (*hoch*); *beesrkärle* (*böser Mensch*), *schneegleggle* (*Schneeglöckchen*). You can find words with the historical non-diphthongized [e] or [o] among them, or the diphthong <au>, not related to the diphthongs in question. Thus, it can be stated that diphthongs <ao> and <ae> are no longer primary characteristics of the Swabian dialect. They were not recorded in any Swabian or Franconian source from Kazakhstan. In other words, the island dialect developed the same way as the dialect of the mother land, i.e., these sounds were lost to approach the High German standard, but it happened independently.

¹⁰ V. M. Žirmunskij, *Problems of Colonial Dialectology...*

¹¹ V.M. Bukharov, *Variants of pronunciation standards for modern German literary language: Monograph.* (Nizhny Novgorod, 1995).

¹² V.M. Žirmunskij, *Problems of Colonial Dialectology...*

The diphthong <oe>

Žirmunskij also considered this diphthong one of the primary characteristics of the Swabian dialect, and it really has nothing in common with the High German standard: *hoes*. The diphthong mentioned in modern sources that corresponds to it but with the raised second component is *hois* and also *héis* (*heiß*) used alongside it. Further widening of the Swabian diphthong [ei>ae] is a typical example of the sound changes in the Early High German period: *zwoi>zwei>zwai*, with which the diphthong <oe> change coincides. Thus, a phenomenon associated with the Early High German standard is observed in this case as well. Its beginning starts with the arrival of the first immigrants in Russia; and this diphthong is no longer a primary characteristic of the Swabian dialect either.

The diphthong <ui>

Žirmunskij considered this diphthong one of the primary characteristics of the Swabian dialect. He defines it as a result of diphthongization of “iu” (ü)¹³. It means that the digraph *iu*, which stands for it, should mean [y] (ü), which was typical of many texts in the Middle High German period. In the Early New High German period, High German diphthongization of [y:]>[Oø] took place: *liute>Leute*, *iuch>euch*, *niuwe>neu*. The diphthong <ui> has not been recorded in any other more recent source. This diphthong has not been preserved in the modern Swabian dialect in Germany either: *iuch – eich* (*euch*); *fiur – fir* (*für*), *niu – nai* (*neu*). We can think of only one example in the modern Swabian dialect: *suid* (*sieden*). If we consider the Old Swabian digraphs as diphthongs, they can not be referred to either lowering or raising ones. They are made up of the vowels [u] and [i] both pronounced with the same high position of the tongue. It means that their categorical phonetic feature is not a sliding articulatory movement of the tongue, but labialization or delabialization of the vowel [i] under the influence of the neighboring vowel [u]; it is contact assimilation of vowels, in fact. In a standard situation, this leads to the formation of the sound [y], which might have diphthongized, and it is reflected in the High German spelling, for instance: <iu-y-oi> – *OLG* diutisk>*MHG* dütisch>*ENHG* doitsch, deutsch. In the Swabian dialect, the process of labialization as a type of assimilation did not take place; instead, the diphthong <ei> *déidsch*; *éich* (*euch*) with varying degrees of openness of the first component <e> appeared. To conclude, we can say that the diphthong <ui> as such is lost in its original form in the Swabian dialect, however, the sounds, that have replaced it, have retained a specific character that allows us to consider them as markers of this dialect.

The diphthong <æA> (äA)

In Žirmunskij's studies, this diphthong is described as one of the primary characteristics of the Swabian dialect and a result of diphthongization of the short open <ä> in such words as *recht*, *besser*. However, due to the absence of sounding examples and special marking in the transcribed texts it is difficult to describe the fate of this diphthong. The only appropriate example in the sounding corpus of the Swabian dialect is “*zrächd*” pronounced as standard *z(u)recht*.

Žirmunskij categorized the remaining diphthongs of the Swabian dialect as secondary characteristics, i.e., having minor deviations from the standard. However, they can also provide new information for understanding the history and trends of development of the Swabian dialect within a language island.

¹³ V.M. Žirmunskij, Problems of Colonial Dialectology...

The diphthong <au>

It can be assumed that this vocal cluster develops in the direction of the standard diphthong [ao], written as “au”. Žirmunskij does not give examples of this diphthong for the beginning of XX century. The analysis of different sources of the second half of XX century has showed that the word *aog* – *Auge* is used in the German language of Pavlodar (Kazakhstan). The same source also records the lexeme *ougen*. There is only one variant recorded in the Swabian sources in Germany; it is *Aug*: *Aus de Auga*, *aus´am Senn* (*Aus dem Auge*, *aus dem Sinn*). The diphthong <au> in standard German has two sources: widening of the narrow MHG diphthong [ou]: *MHG houbet*>(iwr)*haupt* – *überhaupt* (the Volga region), *MHG louf*>*modern Swabian lauf*, *MHG frou*>*modern Swabian frau*. The second predecessor of the diphthong <au> is the long vowel <u>: *MHG buwen*>gbaut (Pavlodar), *MHG bur*> *modern Swabian baura*, *MHG rus*> *modern Swabian raus*, *MHG su*> *modern Swabian sau*. A similar diphthong is recorded in the Franconian dialects which were in close contact with the Swabian dialect in Russia: *South Franconian dubraugst* (brauchst), *mou* (muss), *wou* (wo) and others.

The irregular character of diphthongization of the long [u>au] is indicated by such high-frequency words in modern Swabian as the preposition *auf*: *modern Swabian uf*. This suggests that the diphthong <au> developed in the Swabian island dialects under the influence of other dialects, in particular the Franconian dialect in southern Russia and Crimea.

The diphthongs <ia, ié>

These diphthongs, unlike standard ones, are lowering and differ only in the degree of lowering of the tongue from [i] to [e] and [a]. The main feature of these Swabian diphthongs is that they are preserved in the variant <ié>: *liéb* (early XX century), *fliégen* (end of XX century, Kazakhstan), *lied*, *lieba*, *wiedr* (modern Swabian in German). The long monophthong [i:] is its counterpart in standard German. In this regard, the use of *miasa* и *iéber* instead of *müssa* and *übr* (*müssen*, *über*) in some Swabian sources in the Caucasus and Kazakhstan can be explained by external influence, for example, from the Franconian dialect, in which you can find lexemes like *diechl* instead of Swabian *Duch* (*Tuch*). A certain challenge in describing these diphthongs in any dialect that does not have a codified written form is the question whether they are real diphthongs [ié] / [ië] or the sliding diphthongized realization of the monophthong [i:] like [iE].

The diphthongs <ua> and <ue>

These diphthongs have remained almost unchanged in the Swabian dialect. These old diphthongs are used in various sources without any differentiation: *guad*, *gued* in dialect islands and *guad*, *gued*, *Muadr* (*gut*, *Mutter*) in Germany. The monophthong [u] corresponds to these diphthongs in standard German. Certain deviations can be explained by the fact that there are lexical doublets. For instance, the verb *fuadera* meaning *füttern* is based on two lexemes: OHG *foutar* derived from the Gothic verb of the fodjani-class which is responsible for the umlaut in the modern standard verb. The form that does not have the umlaut corresponds to the French borrowing *futterage*, i.e., the Swabian <ua> and standard [ü] in this example are accidental counterparts.

The diphthong <oi>

This diphthong is found in the Swabian sources of late XX century in Kazakhstan and Altai: *koʀ*, *zwoi*, *gloʀ* (kein, zwei, klein). Unlike the standard vowels, this Swabian diphthong is not the result of regressive assimilation under the influence of the short vowel [ɪ] of the following syllable: [u>y // ɪ] or diphthongization of the long vowel [y:]. This diphthong corresponds to the wide diphthong [ae] in modern German: *oiOi* (einEi), *oimol* (einmal), *woich* (weich), *zwoi* (zwei), *Gloid* (Kleid).

The diphthong <ei>

This diphthong has nothing in common with the diphthong <ae> described above and considered a primary characteristic of the dialect according to Žirmunskij. The analysis of the examples in the Swabian dialect dictionary has revealed a few pronunciation variants of this diphthong¹⁴:

- similar to standard [ae]: *beiDag*, *gscheidr* (gescheit), *-keit* (Suffix), *vrheiradeds* (verheiratet); *eich* (euch);
- the narrowing of the second component to [i] or [j], as a rule, in words bearing the main stress in the sentence: *Aguads Neis!* [najs] (Gutes Neujahr!), *Bollezei* [bolezaɪ] (Polizei), *Wenn Wassr Waiwär, wia woll dadd` Weibr d`Windla wäscha* (Wenn Wasser Wein wäre, worin sollten dann die Frauen (Weiber) die Windeln waschen);
- the narrowing of the first component to [æ], and even [e]: *Arbéida*, *séi*ⁿ, *Wéib*.

The diphthong <ie>

This diphthong is an unstable variable complex sound. On the one hand, it corresponds to Middle High German diphthong [ié] which has different pronunciation variants: *wiébidde* [wiE] (Wie bitte?), *fliéga* (fliegen), *ausanandrliaga*, *fliagsch* (fliegst), *siasenn*, *sesenn* (sie sind), *diasenn* (die sind); *Wa schaffad sia denn[zi:]?* On the other hand, it is pronounced as the monophthong [i:]: *liega* [li:ga] (liegen), *blieba* (geblieben), *iebrig* [i:brig] (übrig).

Conclusion

The research on the phonetic processes in the Swabian dialect spoken in the language islands in Russia has made it possible to draw the following conclusions.

The Swabian dialect spoken by South German immigrants in southern Russia, Crimea, and later in other regions of Russia has undergone a difficult process of development. The German immigrants were forced to relocate more than once during several decades starting from the early 40s of the last century. Many of them lost contact with their communities; cultural, religious and linguistic ties were cut off. For a long time there was no connection with the language of the historical homeland. Being one of many dialect islands that merged and integrated, and the impact of the socio-economic and political

¹⁴ Schwäbisch schwätza: Alles rund um Schwäbisch und Schwaben. Retrieved from: <https://www.schwaebisch-schwaetza.de/>

situation resulted in an almost complete loss of the dialect and the language as a whole for its speakers.

The Swabian dialect lost its primary characteristics under the influence of political and social factors. This indicates that the time when immigrants started to move to Russia coincided with active phonetic processes taking place in the Early High German period in Germany. Such processes are of systemic nature; therefore they continued in Russia and finished with some of the changes similar to the language changes in their mother country. To a large extent, this was facilitated by a change in the attitude to the German language in Russia in the 1950s and 60s. For some time, it was the most commonly taught foreign language in schools, fiction books from the German Democratic Republic became available and there were also print publications in German in Russia. This strengthened the influence of the standard language on the dialects.

The findings indicate that the Swabian dialect spoken in Russia in the second half of XX century was influenced not only by other dialects, primarily, the South Franconian dialect, but also the German standard language. The diphthongs, which had the status of primary characteristics earlier, were replaced by others which became new markers of the Swabian dialect.

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