

The development of the subsystem of consonants in the Latgalian tribal language*

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This article is devoted to the development of the subsystem of consonants in the Latgalian tribal language. The evolution of the Old Latgalian subsystem of consonants is described with reference to the period following upon the differentiation of the East-Baltic language unity and extending to the split of this subsystem into separate Latgalian variants.

The paper deals with the Common Latgalian subsystem of consonants between the disintegration of the East-Baltic linguistic unity and the split of the Common Latgalian subsystem into separate variants.

The process of disintegration of the East-Baltic linguistic unity and some phonetic changes within the subsystem of consonants (first, the depalatalization of $*s$ ($< \text{IE } *k, *k^h$) $> s$, $*z$ ($< \text{IE } *g, *g^h$) $> z$; secondly, the palatalization of $*k > *k'$ and $*g > *g'$ before front vowels and the consonant j ; thirdly, the primary affricatization of $*k', *k'j > c$, $*g', *g'j > z$; fourthly, the fusion of combinations of front consonants and the palatal j into one consonant ($*lj > l$, $*nj > n$, $*rj > r$, $*sj > š$, $*zj > ž$, $*tj > š$, $*dj > ž$, $*cj > č$, $*zj > ž$) resulted in the following phonological subsystem of consonants in the Latgalian tribal language:

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p	b	t	d	k	g
		c	ʒ		
			č	ǰ	
m		n		ŋ	
	v	s	z	j	
			š	ž	
				l	l̥
				r	r̥

The phoneme /n/, besides its fundamental variant, front [n], also had a positional variant, back [ŋ], before the back consonants [k, g].

After the regular palatalization of hard consonants before front vowels (Brejđak 1972:33-40; 1974:220-221; 1982:81-82; see also Kazlauskas 1968:34) and the split of medio-dorsal palatal [j] into pre-dorsal palatalized [j'] and postmedio-dorsal hard [j] (Brejđak 1972:40-42; 1982:82-84), all hard consonants in the Old Latgalian tribal language had palatalized correlatives. Before the disappearance of short vowels in final syllables these palatalized consonants were positional variants of hard consonants. After the disappearance of short vowels in final syllables, palatalized consonants became independent phonemes, but palatal consonants before non-front vowels, which had been independent phonemes, became positional variants of palatalized consonants (Brejđak 1991:101). Phonemes of the /j, v/ type split away from the phonemic subsystem of consonants and formed a separate subsystem after the disappearance of short vowels in final syllables. Thus, as a result of these changes, the Old Latgalian phonological subsystem of consonants was shaped in the following way:

p	p'	b	b'	t	t'	d	d'	k	k'	g	g'
				c	c'	ʒ	ʒ'				
								č	ǰ		
m	m'			n	n'						
		s	s'	z	z'						
						š	ž				
								l	l'		
								r	r'		

In this subsystem the phoneme /n/, besides its fundamental variant, front [n], also had a positional variant, back [ŋ], before the back consonants [k, g]. The phoneme /l/, besides its fundamental variant, front [l], also had a positional variant, back [l̥], between the vowels [u, ū, o, ō, y] and hard consonants. The phonemes /č, ǰ, š, ž/, besides their fundamental variants, the hard consonants [č, ǰ, š, ž], also had positional variants, the palatalized consonants [č', ǰ', š', ž'], before front vowels. The phonemes /n', l', r', k', g'/, besides their fundamental variants, the palatalized consonants [n', l', r', k', g'], also had positional variants, the palatal consonants [ŋ, l̥, r̥, k̥, g̥], before non-front vowels.

For some time after the second affricatization of the consonants [k', k̥, g', g̥] > [č', ǰ'] (Breidaks 1977:247-248; 1981:87-91; Brejđak 1977:32) the Old Latgalian tribal language had only the velar phonemes /k, g/ without their correlatives, palatalized /k', g'/, and their positional variants, palatal [k̥, g̥] (Brejđak 1991:102). At that stage of development the Latgalian phonological subsystem of consonants could be represented in the following way:

p	p'	b	b'	t	t'	d	d'	k	g
				c	c'	ʒ	ʒ'		
								č	ǰ
		m	m'			n	n'		
				s	s'	z	z'		
								š	ž
								l	l'
								r	r'

In this subsystem the phoneme /n/, besides its fundamental variant, front [n], also had a positional variant, back [ŋ], before the back consonants [k, g]. The phoneme /l/, besides its fundamental variant, front [l], also had a positional variant, back [l̥], between the vowels [u, ū, o, ō, y] and hard consonants. The phonemes /č, ǰ, š, ž/, besides their fundamental variants, the hard consonants [č, ǰ, š, ž], also had positional variants, the palatalized consonants [č', ǰ', š', ž'], before front vowels. The phonemes /n', l', r'/, besides their fundamental variants, the palatalized consonants [n', l', r'], also had positional variants, the palatal consonants [ŋ, l̥, r̥], before non-front vowels.

After the second stage of reduction of the final syllables, the transformation of long vowels and diphthongs into short vowels, and, particularly,

after the transformation of the diphthong [ai] into the short vowel [i] in the Latgalian tribal language, the palatalized consonants [k', g'] reappeared before the vowel [i] in the dative singular of \bar{a} -stem nouns, e.g. *[rùk'i] 'to the/a hand' < *[rùkài]; in the second person singular of the Indicative Mood and the second person singular of the Imperative Mood of \bar{a} -stem verbs, e.g. [sok'i] 'say' < *[sokài]; in the second person singular of the Past Indicative of \bar{a} -stem verbs, e.g. [lyk'i] '(you put)' < *[lykài]; in adverbs, e.g. [ilg'i] 'long' < *[ilgài], and, probably, in the nominative plural of o -stem nouns, e.g. [vỳlk'i] 'wolves' < *[vỳlkài] (with reference to the latter see also Stang 1966:184; Rudzīte 1972:219-223). After the above-mentioned phonetic transformations the inventory of the subsystem of consonants in the Latgalian tribal language remained unchanged, because the reappearing palatalized consonants [k', g'] became positional variants of the phonemes /k, g/.

After the devoicing of voiced obstruents in absolute word-final position the Common Latgalian subsystem of consonants contained the following phonemes:

p	p'	b	t	t'	d	k	g
			c	c'	ʒ		
	m	m'		n	n'	č	č̣
		s	s'	z		š	ž
						l	l'
						r	r'

But this stage of development of the Common Latgalian subsystem of consonants cannot be ascribed to the Latgalian tribal language, because the devoicing of voiced obstruents in absolute word-final position in Latgalian occurred under the influence of the neighbouring Slavonic languages not earlier than the integration of the Latgalian, Selonian, Semigalian and Curonian tribal languages into the Latvian national language (Brejđak 1972:52).

After this Common Latgalian stage of the phonological subsystem of consonants and as a result of inner language development as well as of the influence of neighbouring Slavonic languages and other Latvian subdialects, the Common Latgalian subsystem of consonants later developed several va-

riants of the phonological subsystem of consonants in the deep subdialects of Latgale.

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