When two morphologies meet: Russian borrowings in Kamas

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Kamas is a Samoyedic language (Uralic), considered extinct since 1989. The data are based on the INEL Kamas Corpus bringing together transcripts of the last Kamas speaker, Klavdiya Plotnikova, along with earlier available texts. For details on the corpus see [Arkhipov, Däbritz 2018].

Among ca. 1250 occurrences of loan Russian nouns in the INEL Kamas corpus, 255 represent plural forms. Of those plural forms, 206 behave quite straightforwardly, attaching a Kamas plural to a more or less direct rendering of the Russian stem, with main stress preserved (and secondary stress on the suffix). In the majority of cases, the standard Kamas *-ʔi* (*-jəʔ*) plural is used, cf. *blín-ʔi* [pancake-PL], *vólk-əʔi* [wolf-PL], *kápl'ă-ʔi* [drop-PL]. The other plural marker, *-zaŋ,* appears expectedly in the possessive declension: *s'estrá-zaŋ-də* [sister-PL-3SG] 'her sisters'. It should be noted that even here the shape of the noun is not always identical to Russian, since voiceless obstruents regularly undergo intervocalic voicing in Kamas, also in loans, although not without exceptions; cf.: *sv'etóg-əʔi* [flower-PL] (Rus. *cvetók),* *plád-əʔi* [shawl-PL] (Rus. dial. *plat), pastúɣ-əʔi* [shepherd-PL] (Rus. *pastúx).* The remaining cases are more intricate.

In 25 cases, it is undoubtedly the Russian plural form which additionally takes a Kamas plural: *ăgurcí-ʔi* [cucumber.PL-PL] (Rus. *oguréc,* pl. *ogurcý), čəsí-ʔi* [hour.PL-PL] (Rus. *čas,* pl. *časý).* Several words are attested in Russian plural without any Kamas marking; all except one also appear in the corpus with Kamas plural or both, cf.: *jáblăki* [apple.PL] vs. *jáblăkă-ʔi* [apple-PL], *remn'í* [strap.PL] vs. *remn'í-ʔi* [strap.PL-PL].

The more interesting class is represented by words whose stem is not identical either to SG or to the PL form of Russian. The stem is undoubtedly Russian plural, as can be seen from stem alternations: *băt'ínkă-ʔi* [boot.PL-PL] (Rus. *botínok,* pl. *botínki), n'émsă-ʔi* [German.PL-PL] (Rus. *némec,* pl. *némcy);* and/or from the position of stress: *čólă-ʔi* [bee.PL-PL] (Rus. *pčelá,* pl. *pčóly), st'éná-ʔi* [wall.PL-PL] (Rus. *stená,* pl. *stény).* However, the final -i vowel of the PL is not preserved (unlike in *ăgurcí-ʔi* above), and it is substituted not with the common schwa, but with an ă unexpected in non-first syllables in native Kamas items.

Thus the interaction of two morphological systems creates forms which cannot be fully accounted for in native terms of either system. Stress and vowel quality seem both to play a role. It appears that the original stressed a is tolerated before the possessive declension plural *-zaŋ,* but dispreferred before *-ʔi* (only one example); to avoid this, the plural stem with stress on the root is chosen if possible. Stressed ɨ/í is accepted

before -ʔi, while the unstressed ɨ/í more rarely so, being readily substituted with ă. This vowel might have been generalized from words of Russian a-declension as a marker of borrowed item (cf. kapl'ă-ʔi).

Double Russian-Kamas marking is not restricted to the plural. For instance, a similar use of Kamas instrumental case on a Russian instrumental form is also attested (a more common contact-induced pattern being just the use of Kamas instrumental as a calque of the Russian construction).

Interestingly, in a closely related language, Selkup, the plural stem of Russian nouns is only marginally attested in texts from 1960s-1970s; typically nouns appear with their unmarked stem and only get regular Selkup plural marking. Meanwhile, double marking on loans in Selkup is more common in other domains, e.g. loan adverbs typically take further Selkup adverbial markers.

References

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