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Towards a Description of the Dialect of Gammalsvenskby

1. Introduction

Location of the dialect: village of Gammalsvenskby (Russ. *Старошведское*, Ukr. *Зміївка*), Kherson region, Ukraine. The village was founded with involvement of Grigory Potyomkin as a colony in New Russia in 1782 by migrants from the island of Hiiumaa (Sw. *Dagö*), then the Russian Empire, currently Estonia. The majority of foreign colonists in New Russia were Germans: by 1863, the number of Germans in South Russian provinces was 151,925 (!) (Novorossiyskiy kalendar' 1864: 121).

Genetic classification of the dialect: Estonian Swedish, East Swedish, North Germanic. It is the only surviving Scandinavian dialect in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

The number of speakers: 1782 — approx. 880 people; 1800 — 150 or 160 people; 1917 — 718. Now fewer than 20 elderly women; critically endangered.

Previous studies of the dialect: Freudenthal, Vendell 1886 (vocabulary), Karlgren 1953 (grammar outline published by Nils Tiberg; data collected during winter 1904–1905).

Current state of the dialect was not described systematically until 2004. The data presented here was obtained during my 10 trips to the village.

2. Spelling system

Vowels: *a* [a], *ā* [a:], *e* [ɛ], *ē* [e:¹, ɛ:¹], *i* [i], *ī* [i:], *o* [o], *ō* [o:], *u* [u], *ū* [u:], *y* [y], *ä* [ɛ], *ā* [ɛ:], *ö* [œ], *ō* [œ:], *ü* [ɥ]², *ū* [u:], *äi* [ɛ'i, ɛi], *öü* [œ'u, œü]³.

Consonants: *b* [b], *d* [d], *d̥* [d̥], *f* [f], *g* [g], *h* [h], *j* [j], *k* [k], *l* [l], *l̥* [l̥]⁴, *m* [m], *n* [n] ([ŋ] in front of *k*), *ŋ* [ŋ], *p* [p], *r* [r], *s* [s], *š* [ʃ], *t* [t], *t̥* [t̥], *v* [v], *x* [x], *z* [z], *z̥* [z̥].

The consonants *p*, *t*, *k* are not aspirated; *d̥*, *t̥*, *ŋ* are postalveolar (as in Standard Swedish). The combinations *dj*, *gj*, *nj*, *sj*, *tj* designate palatalised consonants; *skj*, *stj* are [sk^h, st^h]. The length of consonants within morphemes is shown by doubling the letter: *tummär* 'empty'. If a long consonant occurs in front of another consonant within a morpheme, its length is not designated: *vänt* [vɛn:t] 'to wait,' whereas on morpheme boundaries it is designated: *tumm-t* (n. sg. of *tumm-är*). The hyphen is employed to show elements of compounds (e.g., *sir-boss* 'sorrel soup') and enclitic forms of personal pronouns (e.g., in *häv-e* 'had it', *vär-e* 'was it', *to-de* 'when you', *vā-ŋ* 'was he'). Phrase stress is shown with a stress sign ' , e.g., *slū* 'h^hj^hōl 'strike to death', i.e. 'kill'. Phonetic variants are divided with /, morphological with //.

Principles behind the spelling system:

- All characters must be monovalent, i.e. there should be no cases when the same letter refers to significantly different sounds, or the same sound is expressed by different letters.
- Single sounds must not be expressed by combinations of two or more characters. However, doubling the character is permitted, as it is necessary for long consonants.
- The array of special symbols and diacritics should be minimised.
- The spelling system should not require considerable training and should be intuitively clear, not only to phoneticians but also to village residents (in case they happen to learn it).
- It should not break the established tradition and evoke bewilderment of colleagues, nor should it require to install a specific font or cause technical problems in publication process.
- It should not be oriented exclusively towards Swedish readers because the ancestors of the village residents are found not only in Sweden but also in e.g. Canada; besides, in the village itself not all residents are familiar with Swedish. Practically, this only concerns [o] = *o* (rather than *å*), [u] = *u* (not *o* as in Swedish), [ɛ, ɥ:] = *ü*, *ū* (not *u*).

Apart from the *ā*, *ō*, *ū*, the sign of vowel length, and the sign of stress, the only diacritic used is the dot in *d̥*, *t̥*, *š*, *ŋ*, *l̥*, *z̥*; the only specific symbol is *ŋ*.

¹ [e:¹] occurs within morphemes, both in closed and in open syllables, e.g. *h[e:¹]n* 'hen', [e:¹]ra 'ear'.

[ɛ:¹] (long close *ē*) typically occurs in morpheme coda position, e.g. *br[ɛ:¹]* 'bread', *br[ɛ:¹]-är* 'brothers', *d[ɛ:¹]-är* 'dead'.

² Central rounded open vowel; lower than Standard Sw. [ø], lips are rounded and protruding.

³ The diphthongs usually shorten in front of long consonants or groups of consonants. In this case the second element is pronounced extrashort, e.g. *g[ɛi]glar* 'gills', [œü]ks-brūn 'eyebrow'.

⁴ Retroflex flap.

NB: the dot doesn't express the same value in all the instances: *ɖ*, *t*, *ʂ*, *ɳ* are postalveolar, *ʃ* is alveopalatal (as in German or Russian), *ʎ* is retroflex, *z* is voiced alveopalatal (only in a couple of Slavonic loanwords).

3. Inflections

Roman numbers refer to morphological, i.e. phonetically non-conditioned, types. Arabic numbers refer to phonetically conditioned variants within morphological types (i.e. morphophonological subtypes). For details and more examples, see Mankov 2017.

Nouns

Basic paradigm is the same as in Swedish, i.e. (1) indefinite sg. (always zero ending), (2) definite sg., (3) indefinite pl., (4) definite pl.

The morphological classification of masc. and fem. nouns depends on indef. pl. and def. sg., which are phonetically non-conditioned forms. The varieties of indef. pl. and def. sg. of neuters are phonetically conditioned.

Masculine:

| Type | Def. sg. | Indef. pl. | Def. pl. | Examples |
|-------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|
| I.1 | -en | -ar | -a// -ana | <i>fisk, fisken, fiskar, fiska// -ana</i> 'fish' |
| I.2 | -n | | | <i>kvüst, kvüstn, kvüstar, kvüsta// -ana</i> 'twig' |
| I.3 | -ŋ | | | <i>stül, stün, stülar, stüla// -ana</i> 'chair' |
| I.4 | zero | | | <i>bjün, bjün, bjünar, bjüna// -ana</i> 'bear' |
| I.5 | -en | -j-ar | -j-a// -j-ana | <i>säkk, säkken, säkkjar, säkkja// -jana</i> 'sack' |
| II.1 | -en/-n/zero | -är// -ar | -e// -ena// -a// -ana | <i>svänsk, svänsken, svänskar// -ar, svänske// -a// -ana</i> 'Swede' |
| II.2 | -n | -är// zero | -e// -ena// -na | <i>bokar, bokan, bokarär, bokare// bokana</i> 'baker', <i>biggjar, biggjan, biggjar// biggjarär, biggjare// -ena</i> 'builder' |
| III.1 | -n | -r | -na | <i>stoka, stokan, stokar, stokana</i> 'stick' |
| III.2 | -an | -ar | -ana// -a | <i>ēnd, ēndan, ēndar, ēnda// -ana</i> 'end' |
| IV | -n/zero | -är with umlaut | -re/-e with umlaut | <i>füt, fütin, fētär, fētre</i> 'foot' |

Feminine:

| Type | Def. sg. | Indef. pl. | Def. pl. | Examples |
|------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| I.1 | -e | -ar | -ana | <i>brü, brüe, brüar, brüana</i> 'bride' |
| I.2 | -e// -ja | -j-ar | -j-ana | <i>sāŋ, sāŋ-e, sāŋj-ar, sāŋj-ana</i> 'bed' |
| II.1 | zero | -r | -na | <i>viku, viku, vikur, vikuna</i> 'week', <i>näsa, näsa, näsar, näsana</i> 'nose' |
| II.2 | -a | -ar | -ana | <i>hēn, hēna, hēnar, hēnana</i> 'hen', <i>sistär, sistra, sistrar, sistrana</i> 'sister' |
| II.3 | -j-a | -j-ar | -j-ana | <i>kirke, kirkja, kirkjar, kirkjana</i> 'church' |
| III | -e | -är with umlaut | -re/-e with umlaut | <i>bük, bük-e, bēk-är, bēk-re</i> 'book' |

Neuter:

| Type | Def. sg. | Indef. pl. | Def. pl. | Examples |
|------|----------|------------|----------|--|
| 1 | -e/zero | -är | -ena/-na | <i>lōmb, lōmbe, lōmbär, lōmbena</i> 'lamb', <i>fīnstär, fīnstre, fīnsträr, fīnstrena</i> 'window', <i>kļē, kļē(e), kļēär, kļē(e)na</i> 'cloth' |
| 2 | zero | -r | -na | <i>stikke, stikke, stikkär, stikken</i> 'piece' <i>ōua, ōua, ōuar, ōuana</i> 'eye' |

Adjectives

Paradigm of adjectives:

| Singular (strong form) | | | Plural | | Weak form | Comparative | Superl. |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| masc. | fem. | neut. | attr. | non-attr. | | | |
| <i>varm-är</i> (1) | <i>varm</i> (2) | <i>varm-t</i> (3) | <i>varm</i> (3) | <i>varm-ar</i> (4) | <i>varm</i> (3) | <i>varmare</i> (5) | <i>varmast</i> (6) |

All inflectional types of declinable adjectives are phonologically conditioned, i.e. they depend on the stem final, namely:

Type 1: Stems in consonants, except for *r*, *l*, and in long (i.e. always stressed) vowels.

Type 2: Stems in *r*, *l*.

Type 3: Stems in unstressed vowels, i.e. di- and polysyllabic stems.

| Type | Masc. sg. | Fem. sg.; attributive pl.; weak form | Neut. sg. | Non-attributive pl. |
|------|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | <i>tumm-är</i> 'empty' <i>nī-är</i> 'new' | <i>tumm</i> <i>nī</i> | <i>tummt</i> <i>nitt</i> | <i>tummar</i> <i>nīar</i> |
| 2 | <i>dīr-an</i> 'expensive' <i>fāl-an</i> 'beautiful' | <i>dīr</i> <i>fāl</i> | <i>dīṭṭ</i> <i>faṭṭ</i> | <i>dīrar</i> <i>fālar</i> |
| 3 | <i>likle-ndār</i> 'lucky' <i>rost-ndār</i> 'rusty' <i>nako-ndār</i> 'naked' | <i>likle</i> <i>roste</i> <i>nako</i> | <i>liklet</i> <i>roset</i> <i>nakot</i> | <i>liklendar</i> <i>rostndar</i> <i>nakondar</i> |

Verbs

Verb paradigm consists of the following forms: (1) infinitive (always identical with present pl. and in most cases with imperative sg.); (2) present sg.; (3) imperative pl.; (4) preterite (never distinguishes numbers in my interviews); (5) supine. Supine and preterite of weak verbs are always identical.

Depending on the form of the preterite and supine, I divide the verbs into the following morphological types (conjugations):

I. Verbs ending in *-a* in the preterite and supine: weak verbs with stems in *-a*.

II. Verbs ending in a dental stop in the preterite and supine: weak verbs with stems terminating in consonants, (long) vowels and diphthongs.

III. Verbs with changes in the root: strong and irregular.

Type I

| Type | Infinitive; present pl.; imperative sg. | Pres. sg. | Imperative pl. | Preterite/supine |
|------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| I.1 | <i>boka</i> 'bake' | <i>bokar</i> | <i>bokae</i> | <i>boka</i> |
| I.2 | <i>vānt</i> 'wait' | <i>vāntar</i> | <i>vānte</i> | <i>vānta</i> |
| | <i>kļīstār</i> 'whitewash' | <i>kļīstrar</i> | <i>kļīst(ā)re</i> | <i>kļīstra</i> |
| I.3 | <i>inke se</i> 'groan' | <i>inkja-še</i> | <i>inke jār (ānt)</i> | <i>inkja se</i> |
| | <i>skinde se</i> 'hurry' | <i>skinda-še</i> | <i>skinde jār (ānt)</i> | <i>skinda se</i> |
| | <i>bire</i> 'begin' | <i>birjar</i> , also <i>bire</i> | <i>bire</i> | <i>birja</i> |

Type II

The distribution of the endings in Type II depends on stem-finals, both in the present and in preterite. In the present system (infinitive, present, imperative) the following groups are distinguished depending on the correlation between the infinitive and present sg.:

1. Stems in voiced stops, *m*, (always long) vowels: pres. sg. in *-ār*.

2. Stems in *ll*, *nn*, *n*: pres. sg. in *-d-ār*.

3. Stems in *r*: pres. sg. with the zero ending.

4. Stems in **j* (reflected as *-e*) with (a) long, (b) short roots.

| Type | Infinitive/pres. pl. | Pres. sg. | Imperative | |
|-------|---|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | | | Sg. | Pl. |
| II.1 | <i>kēp</i> 'buy' | <i>kēpār</i> | <i>kēp</i> | <i>kēpe</i> |
| | <i>glēm</i> 'forget' | <i>glēmār</i> | <i>glēm</i> | <i>glēme</i> |
| | <i>leva/liva</i> 'live' | <i>levār/livār</i> | <i>lēv</i> | <i>leve</i> |
| | <i>trū</i> 'believe' | <i>trūār</i> | <i>trū</i> | <i>trūe</i> |
| II.2 | <i>häll</i> 'pour' | <i>hälldār</i> | <i>häll</i> | <i>hälle</i> |
| | <i>bränn</i> 'burn' | <i>bränndār</i> | <i>bränn</i> | <i>bränne</i> |
| | <i>lōn</i> 'loan' | <i>lōndār</i> | <i>lōn</i> | <i>lōne</i> |
| II.3 | <i>hēr</i> 'hear' | <i>hēr</i> | <i>hēr</i> | <i>hēre</i> |
| II.4a | <i>riņņe</i> 'surround' | <i>riņņār</i> | <i>riņņe</i> | |
| | <i>sēke</i> 'seek' | <i>sēkār</i> | <i>sēk</i> | <i>sēke</i> |
| II.4b | <i>sjōle</i> 'sell' | <i>sjōl</i> | <i>sjōl</i> | <i>sjōle</i> |
| | <i>āre</i> 'plough' | <i>ār</i> | <i>ār</i> | <i>āre</i> |
| | <i>sāte</i> 'plant' | <i>sātār</i> | <i>sätt</i> | <i>sāte</i> |
| | <i>krāve</i> 'demand' (pres. pl. also <i>krāva</i>) | <i>krāvār</i> | <i>krāv</i> | <i>krāve</i> |

For the preterite/supine of Type II, the following grouping is relevant:

1. Stems in *s, n, ll, t* (after *äi*), *k, p, ld*: preterite/supine in *-t*.
 2. Stems in *m, mm, nn, v* and vowels except *äi*: preterite/supine in *-d*. Stems in *r, l*: preterite/supine in *ɖ*.
 3. Stems in *äi*: preterite/supine in *-dd*. After *ē* both *-dd* and *-d* occur.
 4. Some stems in *t* and *d⁵*: zero ending in the pret./sup.
- In preterite and supine of Type II many sandhi regularities take place.

| Type | Infinitive | Preterite/supine |
|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | <i>blēs</i> ‘blow’ | <i>blēst</i> |
| | <i>lōn</i> ‘loan’ | <i>lōnt</i> |
| | <i>still</i> ‘feed’ | <i>stillt</i> |
| | <i>bläit</i> ‘soak’ | <i>bläitt</i> |
| | <i>hōld</i> ‘hold’ | <i>hōlt</i> |
| | <i>sēke</i> ‘seek’ | <i>sēft</i> |
| | <i>kēp</i> ‘buy’ | <i>kēft</i> |
| 2 | <i>drēm</i> ‘dream’ | <i>drēmd</i> |
| | <i>klämm</i> ‘press’ | <i>klāmd</i> |
| | <i>bränn</i> ‘burn’, trans. | <i>brānd</i> |
| | <i>leva/liva</i> ‘live’ | <i>lēvd</i> |
| | <i>hēr</i> ‘hear’ | <i>hēɖ</i> |
| | <i>sjöle</i> ‘sell’ | <i>sjōɖ</i> |
| | <i>svölge</i> ‘swallow’ | <i>svōɖ</i> |
| | <i>hēnje</i> ‘hang’ | <i>hēmd</i> |
| | <i>riņņe</i> ‘ring’ | <i>rēmd</i> |
| | <i>bigge</i> ‘build’ | <i>bēvd</i> |
| | <i>rū</i> ‘row’ | <i>rūd</i> |
| 3 | <i>strāi</i> [stre:i] ‘straw’ | <i>strāidd</i> [streid:] |
| | <i>klē</i> (pō) ‘put on’ | <i>pō-klēdd / pō-klēɖ</i> |
| 4 | <i>hitt</i> ‘find’ | <i>hitt</i> |

Type 3

The present system generally conforms to the same rules as Type II; preterite and supine change the root. A few examples (weak variants are underlined>):

Class 1: *bīt* ‘bite’ — *bāit* — *būte*; *blī* ‘become’ — *blāi* — *blōe*; *gnī* ‘rub’ — *gnāi* // *gnīd* — *gnēe* // *gnīd*; *vri* ‘twist’ — *vrai* // *vrīd* — *vrēe* // *vrīd*.

Class 2: *bjū* ‘invite’ — *bjōu* // *bjūd* — *bjōe* / *bjūe* // *bjūd*; *brūt* ‘break’ — *brōüt* — *brūte* / *brōte*; *flū* ‘fly’ — *flōü* — *flōe*.

Class 3: *bind* ‘tie’ — *band* — *bunde*; *drikk* ‘drink’ — *drakk* — *drukke*; *sväll* ‘swell’ — *svall* — *svülle*.

Class 4: *bära* ‘carry’ — *bār* — *būre*; *kuma* ‘come’ — *komm* — *kume*; *sōa* ‘sleep’ — *sō* — *sūe* / *sōe*; *stjōla* ‘steal’ — *stjūd* — *stjōle*.

Class 5: *bāa* ‘request’ — *bā* — *bāe*; *gäva* ‘give’ — *gāv* — *gāve*; *jāta* ‘eat’ — *ōt* — *jāte*; *ligge* ‘lie’ — *lō* — *lēa*; *site* ‘sit’ — *satt* — *satt*; *sī* ‘see’ — *sō* — *sīd*; *vara* ‘be’ — *vār* — *vare*.

Class 6: *drāa* ‘drag’ — *drū* — *drūe* / *drōe*; *dāi* ‘die’ (of animals) — *dū* ‘die’ (of people — *blī dēār* m., *dē f.*, *dēār* pl.); *gāi* ‘bark’ — *gū* — *gūe*; *lē* ‘laugh’ — *lū* — *lūe*; *slō* ‘strike; mow’ — *slū* — *slāe*; *stō* ‘stand’ — *stū* — *stōe*; *tōa* (also *tā*) ‘take’ — *tū* — *tāe*.

Class 7: *fall* ‘fall’ — *foll* — *falle*; *fō* ‘get; must’ — *fī* — *fōe*; *grōt* ‘weep’ — *grāit* — *grote*; *gō* ‘go’ — *gī* — *gōe*; *hugg* ‘hew’ — *hogg* — *hugge* // *hugga*; *lōüp* ‘fade’ — *lōüp* // *lōüpt* / *lōüft* — *lūpe* / *löpe*.

4. Vocabulary and dictionary

At the moment, the FieldWorks database has been compiled up to the middle of the letter S. The number of entries at the moment is 3321, including compounds, verbs with particles, and phonetical and morphological variants.

Examples of the entries

¹*bī* noun m. 1.1 village: *Hēr vār trī tiska bīar*_{INDEF.PL.}, *a vōran stū e mittüte milla-dom... vōr bī*_{INDEF.SG.} *stū* ‘inn milla-dom, vō-Švānskbī LU Here were three German villages, and ours stood in the middle between them, our Swedish village.

²*bī* noun n. 1 // m. 11.2 // f. 11.2 bee: *Tēr, kōnn tom vill bīa*_{DEF.PL.} *lād* ‘inn huniņ ūte rāiana, tom gāra ‘fast he *hōle* LU Where the wild bees put honey in the rush, they do up that hole.

⁵ These are *fā(r)līt se* ‘hope’, *gift se* ‘marry’, *hitt* ‘find’, *rādd* ‘scare’ (also Type I.2), *smālt* ‘melt’ (transitive), *vēnd* ‘turn’.

bāran adj. 2 bare: *unde bār_{WEAK} himmen* MP under the open sky; *Han jār grannt skallatār. Hūe jār bāt_{NEUT.}* LU He's totally bald. The head is bare.

flū v. III.2 (perfect with *vara*) fly: *Äild-gnistana flū_{PRES.SG.}, o flöü_{PRET.}* 'titt po han kask-rukan LU The sparks are flying, and have flown there on the heap of furcoats; *Han komm titt flū_{and_{PART.I}} bait oss, o ja pajja-en* LU He <the dog> came there running <"flying"> after us, and I stroked him.

flū 'bott fly away: *Gässe flöü_{PRET.}* 'bott rai ot varm lande, he blai rai kallt. *Um vöre kuma-dom 'ötär* MP The geese have already flown away to the warm land, it's already become cold. In spring they come back; *Fūla jara bott-flöe_{SUP.(PERF.)}* AL LU MP The birds have flown away.

flū 'inn fly in: *Dömbe flūār_{PRES.SG.}* 'inn fron gōdn LU The dust flies in from the yard; *Ja läivd finstäre ipet, he blēst hōle, o komm-dār mike dōmb inn-flū_{and_{PART.I}} girm finstäre ot stjūe* LU I've left the door opened, it blew a lot, and there came a lot of dust flying in through the window to the house.

5. Structural differences between fluent speakers and semi-speakers

Personal pronouns in interviews with fluent speakers AL, LU, MP (str. — strong phonetic form; w. — weak phonetic form):

| | Sg. | | | Pl. | | |
|---------|-----------|--------------------------------|--|--------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| | 1 pers. | 2 pers. | 3 pers. | 1 p. | 2 p. | 3 p. |
| Subject | <i>ja</i> | str. <i>tō</i> ; w. <i>-de</i> | m.: str. <i>han</i> ; w. <i>-en/-n</i> | <i>ve</i> | <i>ne</i> | str. <i>tom</i> ; w. <i>-dom</i> |
| Object | <i>me</i> | str. <i>te</i> ; w. <i>-de</i> | f.: str. <i>hon</i> ; w. <i>-on</i> n.: str. <i>he</i> ; w. <i>-e</i> | <i>os(s)</i> | <i>jār</i> | |

In interviews with a semi-speaker (mostly EU):

| | Sg. | | | Pl. | | |
|---------|-----------|---|---|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| | 1 p. | 2 p. | 3 p. | 1 p. | 2 p. | 3 p. |
| Subject | <i>ja</i> | str. <i>tō, te</i> ; w. <i>-de, -te</i> | m.: <i>han</i> | <i>ve, me</i> | <i>ne, nō</i> | str. <i>tom</i> ; w. <i>-dom</i> |
| Object | <i>me</i> | <i>tō, de, dō</i> | f.: <i>hon</i> n.: str. <i>he</i> ; w. <i>-e</i> | <i>os(s)</i> | <i>jār</i> | |

Pronouns of the 2nd and 3rd person sing. and 3rd person plural distinguish strong and weak phonetic forms. Strong form is used at the beginning of the sentence (regardless of the stress) and in a stressed position. Weak form is used enclitically. These "conservative" regularities were established on the material of interviews with fluent speakers. Despite the fact that in interviews with them strong forms occasionally occur in place of the weak, the distribution of strong and weak forms is quite consistent. In interviews with EU, the semi-speaker, the "conservative" use of the pronouns 'you' (sg.), 'it', 'they' is also possible:

Tō_{STRONG} *fōr kamm titt hōr* 'You need to comb your hair'; **Kō** *kūka-~~de~~_{WEAK}?* 'What are you cooking?'; **He_{STRONG}** *blikstār o donar-~~e~~_{WEAK}* 'The lightning is flashing and the thunder is rolling'; **Tom_{STRONG}** *grāv kadeftar* 'They are digging up potatoes'; **Kott** *kroka-~~dom~~_{WEAK}?* 'Where are they climbing?'

However, very often strong forms occur instead of weak: **Kō** *gitsä-~~tō~~?* 'What do you think?' [fluent: *Kō gitsa-~~de~~?*]; **Hund** *kan bīt tō* 'The dog can bite you' [fluent: *Hund kan bīt-~~de~~*]; **Kō** *kostar he?* 'What does it cost?' [*Kō kvūstar-~~e~~?*]; **Kofēre** *hindra tom me?* 'Why are they bothering me?' [*Komfēre hindä-~~dom~~ me?*].

The pronouns 'he' and 'she' in interviews with EU have not occurred in the weak form at all.

Alongside mixing up strong and weak forms, in interviews with EU the conflation of these also occurs frequently, namely: **1)** *te* 'you' in the strong form (instead of *tō*) as a conflation of *tō* and *-de*: **Te** *kan fār~~k~~ila tō* 'You can catch a cold' [fluent: *Tō kan fār~~k~~ila-~~de~~*]. **2)** *te* in the weak form (instead of *-de*): **Kofēre** *gävā-~~te~~ i~~n~~a svār?* 'Why do you give no answer?' [*Komfēre svora-~~de~~ änt?*]. **3)** *dō* in the object position as a contamination of *-de* and *tō*: **Go** *roka dō!* 'Go have a bath!'

Other contaminated forms in interviews with semi-speakers: **1)** *me* 'we' (dial. *ve* 'we' and Russ. *мы*): **Me** *brās pankukar* 'We bake pancakes'; **Me** *bosa vain* 'We heat the water'. **2)** *sō* (*se* and *tō*): **Kofēre** *fräida-~~tō~~ sō?* 'Why do you rejoice?' [fluent: *Komfēre fräida-~~de~~-~~de~~?*]. **3)** *nō* (*ne* 'you, pl.' and *tō* 'you, sg.'): **Kofēre** *fräida se nō?* 'Why do you rejoice?' [*Komfēre fräida-~~ne~~ jār?*]. All these forms have never occurred in interviews with fluent speakers.

Overall, as contrasted with the fluent speakers of the dialect, the grammar and vocabulary of semi-speakers is characterised by the following features:

- High frequency of free variation in morphology.
- Regularities in the distribution of forms are weak.
- Numerous contaminations, due to which the number of forms increases.
- Weak regularities in attaching affixes to stems. Semi-speakers possess the same set of affixes as the fluent speakers and may be familiar with the stems, but they do not possess the rules of attaching a specific affix to a specific stem, due to which historical links between stems and their affixes are broken.
- Periphrastic constructions instead of a specific verb, e.g. *gāra häitt* 'make hot' instead of *hita* 'to warm'.

- Use of words with a more general sense (hyperonyms) instead of those with a specialised sense (hyponyms).
- Limited vocabulary.

6. Particularly problematic areas of the current grammar description: Free variation or specific grammatical meaning?

- Distribution of definite vs. indefinite forms of nouns. There are the following strict restrictions: the indefinite form is only possible in the sg. and only with count nouns; in the construction *där + vara* ‘be’ (= *there is*, etc.): *Näst paṭṭana jū-dār dūn, o näst gässe 'ō* ‘With the ducks, there’s down, and with the geese too’. There are several instances when the definite form occurs with the *där + vara* pattern, but they are very rare: *To ve lēvd üte Pōln, so vā-dār üte skūḷa blakk-glāsna po skūḷ-bānkja* ‘When we lived in Poland, so there were **the** inkpots in the school on the school tables’. Apart from these cases, the regularities in the occurrence of the def. and indef. forms are vague. Conspicuously, the occurrence of the definite form is very frequent. Is it used when the speakers refer to a repetitive or a habitual situation typical of their household and routine? Cf.: *Fār gjūḍ foḷke soḷe-e allt, defāll pottar frōn läiäre_{DEF.SG.}, he mado vara spiko-läiäre_{DEF.SG.}* ‘Earlier, the people made everything themselves, for example pots from **the** clay, it probably was **the** sticky clay’.

- The occurrence of the perfect. The perfect, and even more so the pluperfect, is not a prominent form in the dialect, and preterite is generally prevalent. Perfect is built with the auxiliaries ‘have’ and ‘be’ + supine: *To brāsä-de 'üt-e, fläske, som ja hār sundär-bita, tät-e blār brünt* ‘Then you fry it out, the lard that I have cut to pieces until it becomes brown’; *Han gā räi loṅätär, a häim jā-ṅ antän. Konn jā-ṅ blōe? Kannske gā-n 'inn näst nōn 'än?* ‘He went a long time ago already, but he’s not at home yet. Where has he disappeared? Maybe he went to see somebody?’ Does perfect retain a specific grammatical meaning, or is in free variation with preterite and being replaced with it?

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