# Social and Speech Portraiting as a Method for Studying Heritage Russian: Elderly Russian Emigrants in Harbin and their Descendants /
## *Retratos sociais e de fala como um método de estudo de russo de herança: emigrantes russos idosos em Harbin e seus descendentes*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the Russian heritage speakers in Harbin, elderly emigrants and their descendants, using the social and speech portraiting method. The Russian diaspora in China arose in the late 19th century when the Chinese-Eastern railway was built – a joint Russian-Chinese project. After 1952, a mass exodus of the Russian population from China began: repatriation or emigration to Australia, the USA and Brazil. In the early 21st century, less than ten members of the Russian diaspora remained in Harbin. The specific nature of the Russian emigrant language in Harbin was described through the social and speech portraiting of the heritage speakers' identities. This method may be used to analyze the language of emigrants in different countries, to reveal the unique and universal processes in it. Additionally, the article describes strategies and tactics for gathering language material from elderly informants.

KEYWORDS: Heritage Russian; Russian emigration; China; Social and speech portraiting; Language and aging

*RESUMO*

*Este artigo tem como objetivo descrever os falantes de herança de russo em Harbin, os emigrantes idosos e seus descendentes, através do método de retratos sociais e de fala. A diáspora russa na China ocorreu no final do século XIX, quando a Ferrovia da China Oriental, um projeto conjunto russo-chinês, foi construída. Depois de 1952, começou um êxodo em massa da população russa da China: repatriação ou emigração para a Austrália, EUA e Brasil. No início do século XXI, menos de dez membros da diáspora russa permaneciam em Harbin. A natureza específica da língua russa falada por emigrantes em Harbin foi descrita através do método de retratos sociais e de fala, usado para caracterizar as identidades dos falantes de herança. Esse método pode ser usado para analisar a língua dos emigrantes em diferentes países, para revelar os processos únicos e universais em relação a ela. Além disso, o artigo descreve estratégias e táticas para coletar material linguístico de informantes idosos.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Russo de herança; Emigração russa; China; Retratos sociais e de fala; Linguagem e envelhecimento*

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**Introduction**

The areas of Russian emigration in the 20th century included countries of Europe, Asia, North and South America and Australia. The largest emigration wave from Russia took place after the revolution: all continents experienced both emigration flows from Russia soon after the October revolution, and another migration movement several decades later, in the mid-20th century.

Despite the general causes of the post-revolutionary emigration from Russia, populations of Russian emigrants in different places have its own history and its own specific nature, arising from the social composition of the emigrants, the conditions of the receiving country and other social factors, which were also reflected in the language competences of emigrants, and the preservation of their native language, Russian.

The Russian diasporas in the West (in relation to Russia) have been the subjects of the largest number of linguistic studies: in France, Italy, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, the UK, Bulgaria, the USA and Canada (Golubeva-Monatkina, 2001; Granovskaya, 1995; Zemskaya; Glovinskaia; Bobrik, 2001). The specific nature of the western direction of Russian emigration was that it usually involved highly educated people, members of the aristocracy and intelligentsia and officers, who spoke European languages and were therefore capable of adapting more quickly in a country where a foreign language was spoken.

There was also another direction of Russian post-revolutionary emigration – to the East: to Asian countries, primarily China. The center of the Russian eastern diaspora is considered to be Harbin. The city was founded during the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) in 1898, long before the 1917 revolution in Russia. The road was built according to a secret agreement made between Russia and China on the construction of the CER, which was to have a service period of 80 years, during which the railway was to be under the jurisdiction of two countries – Russia and China (Ablova, 2004). The railway was built according to designs and under the supervision of Russian engineers. At the same time, the city of Harbin was also built. The railway administration was located in Harbin, and along the railway line, villages were built for the Russian population servicing the railroad. Thus, by the time that post-revolutionary emigration from Russia to the Northeast China began, there was a large Russian colony of over

50,000 people (Ablova, 2004; Lazareva; Sergeev, 2001; Ablazhei, 2001), with infrastructure organized according to Russian lines that was quite developed by the standards of that time, while the Russian language was used for many spheres of activity of the Russian-speaking population: economic-production; official business; education; media – periodical press and radio; book publication; cultural life etc. (Oglezneva, 2009). Accordingly, a Russian language environment existed in Harbin, which did not require an obligatory knowledge of the language of the new country.

Post-revolutionary Russian eastern emigration, which had similar motives to western emigration from Russia, had a different composition of emigrants: refugees to the east did not only come from privileged groups of Russian society and the intelligentsia, but also included workers, peasants and Cossacks (Dubinina; Tsipkin, 1996).

A special feature of the Russian post-revolutionary emigration both to the West and the East was the emigrant feeling of certainty that their stay in a foreign country would only be temporary, but historical circumstances turned out differently, and often instead of returning home, Russian emigrants moved to other countries in search of a better life. This is characteristic both for the western and eastern diaspora: from Europe many Russian refugees moved to the USA and Canada, and from Asian countries, primarily China, to Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada and countries of Latin America.

The history of Russian emigration to Brazil is studied by a number of Brazilian researchers (Bytsenko, 2006; Ruseishvili, 2016, 2018; Vorobieff, 2006). Skorobogatova et al (2021) estimate that, in 1950s, Brazil accepted up to 9,000 Russian refugees from China. This emigration wave mainly comprised young people: 44% of Russians arriving from China were under 29, with many families with single mothers (Ruseishvili, 2018). In Brazil, they settled in major urban centers, primarily in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Owing to the large number of Russophone children, the Eastern-rite Catholic authorities even founded two Russian boarding schools that were moved to the Ipiranga district of São Paulo in the 1960s (Higa, 2015; Vorobieff, 2006). The schools were closed in the 1970s when the children of the Chinese Russians had already grown up, but their impact on the preservation of the Russian language and culture in this generation of emigrants

cannot be underestimated. Skorobogatova et al (2021) estimate, based on the IBGE 1950 census (IBGE, 1956), that around 1,500 of these immigrants could still be alive.

In 2021, Smirnova Henriques et al. (2021, 2022) began to collect the recordings of heritage Russian spoken in Brazil by elderly Russophone emigrants to compose the BraPoRus corpus. They enrolled in the study 31 participants with a mean age of 77.3 years. One third (13 out of 31) of participants were born in China, mainly in Harbin. In personal communication, the authors of the *corpus* reported that the first attempts to analyze the phonetic features of the pronunciation in heritage Russian faced an important problem of lack of reference: very few recordings of the Russian language spoken in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are available. In addition, in Harbin, a special variety of Russian was spoken, and the recordings of this speech variety are not available to the Brazilian researchers. The heritage Russian spoken in Brazil preserves some features from the old Russian spoken one hundred years ago, but it also suffers interference from Brazilian Portuguese. The current work describes the phonetic features of Russian spoken in Harbin by old emigrants, and this can provide a reference for the studies of heritage Russian in Brazil.

We began a study of the Russian language of the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin in early 2000. During scientific expeditions to China in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2006, we made audio recordings of the speech of the last Russian emigrants who were still living in China. The last Russian resident of Harbin, Yefrosinya Andreevna Nikiforova, passed away in 2006, marking the end of the Russian eastern emigration.

The heritage Russian spoken by emigrants who came to Brazil from China may be considered direct heirs of the variant of Russian language which was common in Harbin in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in China and other Chinese towns and villages along the Chinese Eastern Railway line. Russian in Harbin and along the CER line in this period was distinguished by its high power of communication which was a factor in its preservation, and also, according to numerous testimonies of contemporaries, by following the pre-revolutionary language standard (Taut, 2001; Raian, 2005).

The special Russian language of the Harbin residents is mentioned extensively in various sources. "The historical and socio-psychological nature of Harbin society is revealed by certain unique features of the language of the Harbin residents, the style and

culture of language behavior of city residents" wrote former Harbin resident Levitsky (1998).[1]

The last members of the Russian emigration in Harbin spoke Russian in a special way, following old language standards acquired in their families and in Russian educational institutions of Harbin. In 2000, they were people of advanced age (born in 1910, 1912, 1923, 1931, being the youngest informant born in 1935), had lived difficult lives and lived alone, so interviews with them required tact, human involvement, and genuine interest in their lives. At the moment of their interviews, they were no longer living in the old patriarchal Russian Harbin as it was in the first half of the 20th century, but in a large, modern Chinese city, which Harbin had become by the end of the 20th century. However, most of them did not speak Chinese, and when we asked them why, they replied: "What for? Harbin was a Russian city." (N. A. Davidenko, born 1910)

The aim of this article is to describe the Russian heritage speakers in Harbin using the social and speech portraiting method. This method may be used to analyze the language of emigrants in different countries, to reveal the unique and universal processes in it. Additionally, the article describes strategies and tactics for gathering language material from elderly informants.

## 1 Theoretical Background: Social-Speech Portraiting as a Method of Study

One of the possible directions of studying the speech of emigrants is:

> a monograph description of the speech of individuals characterized by close attention to their features at all levels of language, to the specifics of language behavior, taking into account personal and professional qualities, features of biography, conditions of learning Russian etc. As a result of this study, we receive a speech portrait of a certain person, which reflects both general features inherent to members of various groups and sub-groups of emigrants sharing various attributes, and by individual features inherent to them as a person (Zemskaya; Glovinskaia; Bobrik, 2001).[2]

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[1] In the original: "Istoricheskaia i social'no-psihologicheskaia harakteristika harbinskogo soobshchestva vospolniaetsja vyjavleniem nekotoryh svoeobraznyh chert jazyka harbincev, stilja i kul'tury rechevogo povedenija gorozhan."

[2] In the original: "monograficheskoe opisanie rechi otdel'nyh lic, harakterizuemoe pristal'nym vnimaniem k ee osobennostiam na vseh urovniah jazyka, k specifike rechevogo povedeniia, uchityvaiushhee lichnye i professional'nye svoistva, osobennosti biografii, usloviia osvoeniia russkogo iazyka i t. p. V rezul'tate takogo izucheniia my poluchaem rechevoii portret opredelennogo cheloveka, otrazhaiushhiii kak ego

In the Russian speech of the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin, general and specific features can be characterized. The specific features are related to both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors: belonging to a certain generation of emigration, origin, education, profession, gender, family situation, temperament etc.

One might have predicted that the living conditions in a city in China that was multi-ethnic and polyglot in the first half of the 20th century, with the growing dominance of the Chinese population and dominance of the Chinese language in all spheres of life in the second half of the 20th century, would inevitably have led to emigrants learning the local language, giving rise to a bilingual situation. However, the real linguistic situation that formed in Harbin shows a diversity of types in the number of languages used in communication.

The language identities in our study are described through the social and speech portraiting that shows the language identity combined with its social and language features, in relations of mutual conditioning. Each of the last members of the Russian diaspora in Harbin is an interesting object for social and speech portraiting, as they demonstrate a type of language adaptation of a specific population with their own sociolinguistic variables, in the unusual language situation of the Russian eastern diaspora in Harbin.

The interest in the language of the Russian diaspora that arose over the past few decades has firstly revealed for researchers one of the special forms of existence of the Russian language – the Russian heritage language of the diaspora, and secondly, many interesting language identities – bearers of this form of existence of the Russian language (Golubeva-Monatkina, 2001; Zemskaya, 2000; Zemskaya; Glovinskaia; Bobrik, 2001; Krasilnikova, 2001; Granovskaya, 2001). A description of a language identity – both typified and individual – requires, if possible, an exhaustive knowledge of the speaker's language ability, realized in written and/or verbal texts produced by the speaker.

The tradition of speech portraiting originated at the Moscow sociolinguistic school. It was founded by M.V. Panov, who in his monograph "The history of Russian literary pronunciation of the 18th-20th centuries" (Panov, 2002) presented the evolution of the Russian orthoepic norm not only in the historical, but also in the personological

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obshchie cherty, prisushchie emu kak predstaviteliu raznyh mnozhestv i podmnozhestv emigrantov, raspredelennyh po tem ili inym priznakam, tak i ego individual'nye cherty, prisushhie emu kak lichnosti."

aspect, creating a series of phonetic portraits, illustrating a certain period in the history of the pronunciation system of the Russian language. One of the goals of the book was to determine "to what degree pronunciation changes are caused by external (social) impacts on the language and to what degree by the internal laws of the language" (Panov, 2002.)[3] Thus, Panov's phonetic portraits are accompanied by biographical information and information of a historical and cultural nature, helping to explain a certain type of pronunciation. Language facts in the personal interpretation become tangible and convincing.

The strategy of speech portraiting is described by Kitaigorodskaya and Rozanova in 1995. It aims to describe the characteristic features of language identity and unique speech individuality. Kitaigorodskaya and Rozanova (1995, pp.3-4) state that "usually the researcher has a limited amount of notes and observations on the speech activity of the speaker in different communicative environments, which makes it impossible to present the person as a full language identity."[4] However, the available texts of verbal speech have in their authors' opinion "diagnostic information sufficient to create speech portraits."[5] In speech or sociolinguistic portraiting, it is important "to record striking diagnoses speech patches,"[6] as Nikolaeva (1991, p.71) wrote, noting that "many language paradigms, from phonetic to word-formation, are quite in keeping with general normative parameters, and are therefore of no interest."[7]

Although the speech portrait reflects individual features of the speech of a specific speaker, it reflects the language existence of the social group to which the speaker belongs, and in this sense any speech portrait is a typical phenomenon.

Creating speech portraits taking into account features at all language levels, all speech behavior features and also personal, professional and biographical information, according to Zemskaya (2001), is one of the possible directions for studying the Russian language of the diaspora. In her monograph "The Language of the Russian Diaspora,"

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[3]In the original: "v kakoi stepeni proiznositel'nye izmeneniia obuslovleny vneshnimi (social'nymi) vozdeiistvijami na iazyk i v kakoii – vnutrennimi zakonami iazyka."

[4] In the original: "obychno v rasporiazhenii issledovateleii imeetsia ogranichennyii ob'em zapiseii i nabliudeniĭi nad rechevoii dejatel'nost'iu govoriashchego v raznyh kommunikativnyh sferah, chto ne daet vozmozhnosti predstavit' ego kak iazykovuju lichnost' vo vsem mnogoobrazii."

[5] In the original: "diagnostiruiushcheii informacieii, dostatochnoii dlia sozdaniia rechevyh portretov."

[6] In the original: "fiksirovat' iarkie diagnostiruiushhie rechevye piatna."

[7] In the original: "mnogie iazykovye paradigmy, nachinaia ot foneticheskih, konchaia slovoobrazovatel'nymi, okazyvaiutsia vpolne sootvetstvuiushchimi obshchenormativnym parametram i potomu interesa ne predstavliaiut."

(2001) Zemskaya presents speech portraits of 25 representatives of the Russian emigration in the West, a significant number of whom are emigrants of different generations of the first wave. In the speech portraiting of Russian who emigrated abroad and their descendants, attention is paid to phonetic, morphological, word formation, syntactical and lexical features of their speech in comparison with the standards of the Russian language. Speech portraiting made it possible to reveal the typical features of the speech of emigrants of the first wave and their descendants, showing on the one hand trends of development of the Russian language, which are intensified in the language of emigration, and on the other, to make conclusions on the significant degree of preservation of the Russian language in emigration, caused by factors of an extra-linguistic nature.

The Russian eastern diaspora and the Russian language of the eastern branch of emigration from Russia has similar features to the western branch of emigration, as well as significant differences. One of the ways of finding out what is common and what is specific in the Russian language of the western and eastern branches of emigration is speech portraiting of representatives of Russian emigration to the East.

The first "portrait sketches" of the speech of representatives of the Russian eastern emigration are described in works by Oglezneva (2001, 2005) and Starygina (2001). The special Russian language of old Harbin residents was also discussed in Russian newspapers, magazines and television. However, a full systematic description of the speech of individual representatives of Russian eastern emigration, which may be called speech portraits, was presented in the monograph "The Russian Language in the Eastern Diaspora (based on material of Russian speech in Harbin)" only in 2009, by Oglezneva. The speech "portrait gallery" created in our work is an attempt at a full typological examination of the speech of the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin.

## 2 Methods

### 2.1 Material

We made an attempt at speech portraiting of the last representatives of the Russian eastern diaspora: the Harbin residents Mikhail Mikhailovich Myatov, born 1912;

Yefrosinya Andreevna Nikiforova, born 1910; Nina Afanasievna Davidenko, born 1910; Margarita Ivanovna Antonova, born 1926; Vladimir Alexeevich Zinchenko, born 1935; Paraskeva Valetinovna Svininnikova, born 1931, and former Harbin residents, now citizens of Australia, Nikolai Nikolaevich Zaika, born in 1938, and Viktoria Stanislavovna Statsenko, born 1943. The meetings with them took place in the Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God, the last functioning Orthodox church in Harbin, and also in a home environment.

All of the last representatives of the small Russian diaspora in Harbin were citizens of Russia (they had passports issued by the Soviet consulate in Harbin after 1945), but had never been to Russia, or had been taken from the country in childhood. Five of the six representatives had preserved a good standard of Russian. The most unexpected fact was that four of the six Russians did not know Chinese, the language of their country of residence and the city of Harbin.

Our informants included representatives of different generations of emigrants: the first generation came to Harbin from Russia as children (M. M. Myatov, Ye. A. Nikiforova, P. V. Svininnikova); the second generation were born in Harbin to parents who had come from Russia (N. A. Davidenko, V. A. Zinchenko). We also interviewed representatives of the third generation of Russian Harbin residents who were born in Harbin, lived there and then migrated to Australia, their language competence was also taken into account (V. S. Statsenko, N. N. Zaika).

The information about representatives of different generations of the Russian eastern diaspora revealed in the course of social-speech portraiting made it possible to present the Russian language of the eastern branch of the Russian diaspora throughout the entire period of its existence as a dynamic process.

The focus of our attention was primarily on the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin: those who did not leave China and remained in Harbin until the end of their lives. Decades of living in a foreign environment naturally leads to the need to speak the language of the country of residence, and a decline in the ability to speak the native language in the absence of a permanent language environment. A different result forces us to look for the special reasons for preserving the native language in unfavorable conditions. The last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin are unique language

identities demonstrating the long-term preservation of the native language in a foreign language environment.

## 2.2 Protocol of Data Collection

The material of the study was collected in interviews. The interviews with the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin were held in the form of a free discussion on various topics, but the main topic was the life of Russian Harbin at different periods of its history. Questionnaires on the topics of "Harbin" and "language" were drawn up. During the interview, the sequence of questions in the questionnaire could vary depending on situational factors. This was a deliberate decision by the interviewers, in order to make the conversation with the informants as natural as possible. The "Harbin" questionnaire contained questions about the history of Harbin, about the life of Russians there, the family, how their parents (fathers or grandfathers) ended up in China, about the organization of Russian life there, education, service (work), the cultural life of Harbin etc. This was one "layer" of questions, which concealed another set of questions concerning the function of the Russian language in Harbin, revealing its status and the language competences of Harbin residents, native speakers of Russian. Answers to the questions about language presented the most interest for the linguist researcher, but in the conversation itself they were portrayed as questions of secondary importance.

The goal was to record the maximum amount of speech material from our informants, which besides recording their unique life experience, subsequently made it possible to do a full linguistic analysis, and in particular the social and speech portraiting of the language identities studied.

The leading principle in the discussion with the old Russian Harbin residents was the principle of listening carefully, without hurrying, with pauses when the informants thought about what they had said, or recalled details from the past. The emotional perception of the stories of our informants was also important, and showing sympathy for the experiences in their life as *émigré*, and consequently, warm, trusting relations were established between the interviewers and the informants, ensuring that new meetings and new interviews could be held. The difficult times they had lived through (they were unable to return home because the Soviet Union had declared them enemies of the people

– "white bandits;" the Japanese occupation of Harbin in 1933-1945; the cultural revolution in China in 1967) made them wary and distrustful of people, so the trust that arose between us was an important condition of success in interviewing the last remaining emigrants of Russian Harbin, and collecting unique language and historical material.

## 2.3 Recording Procedure

The recordings were made in the Orthodox Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God in Harbin or a quiet room using a standard cassette Dictaphone, Panasonic RQ 10 and later digitized for further analysis and saved as mp3 filesThe total duration of the recordings was over 45 hours of speech.

The recordings of the speech of the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin was transcribed by members of our scientific student seminar for the study of the Russian language in the eastern diaspora in 2005-2007 at the Amur State University (Blagoveshchensk, Russia), and filled 41 exercise books (over 800 pages of transcribed and printed text). The recordings are held at the laboratory of regional linguistics of Amur State University.

## 2.4 Phonetic Analysis

An analysis of the last representatives of the Russian eastern diaspora speech consisted of the following stages: 1) multiple listenings of the speech samples and their perceptual analysis; 2) detection of speech realizations of the Russian language system in the speech of informants at phonetic, grammatical (morphological and syntactical) and lexical levels; 3) systemization of data in generalized tables; 4) a comparative analysis of data; 5) establishing general and specific features in the speech of informants.

Speech samples from different speakers were of different duration and variable content, which made it difficult to analyze certain positions, and therefore some pronunciation features of some speakers remain unclear.

At the final stage, the stage of interpreting the language material, the main principle was to establish how the various linguistic realizations in our informants' speech corresponded to or did not correspond to the standard of the Russian literary language.

## 3 Results

A determining factor for characterizing a language identity is the attitude towards the pronunciation standard. In interpreting pronunciation features of the speech of Russian Harbin residents, two variants of the pronunciation standard that were characteristic for the early 20th century were taken into account: the Moscow and Petersburg standards (Panov, 2002), and also the contemporary pronunciation standard, reflected in the latest dictionaries, in order to determine the direction of development of the Russian pronunciation standard in Harbin in comparison with its development in the country's centers.

In the course of the social speech portraiting, we firstly established the social characteristics of the informants, which was necessary in a number of cases to detect the pronunciation variants present in their speeches, and secondly the special features of the informant's Russian pronunciation based on 15 pronunciation parameters compared with the modern Russian literary pronunciation standard.

In the description of the speech of our informants, we analyzed their pronunciation of vowels and consonants, individual combinations of sounds and grammatical forms. The selection of pronunciation parameters for speech portraiting was based on the features of the pronunciation standard of the Russian literary language of the early 20th century that varied depending on the use by speakers of the Moscow or Petersburg pronunciation standard.

The Moscow and Petersburg pronunciation standards of the Russian literary language were formed historically. According to Verbitskaya (1976), "for two centuries two equally recognized variants of the pronunciation standard existed: the Moscow and Petersburg kinds," which were distinguished by a number of pronunciation features of vowels, consonants and grammatical forms. The main cause for the differences between the Moscow and Petersburg pronunciation was the phonetic diversity of the dialects surrounding Moscow and St. Petersburg (Avanesov, 2005; Shcherba, 2004; Verbitskaya, 2001). Additionally, the Petersburg pronunciation had a tendency to bookishness, "literalness," influenced by the written standard (Avanesov, 2005).

After studying the speech of all our informants by the method of social and speech portraiting, for the majority of variants realized in their speech we established the ones that contained the specific Harbin pronunciation variant.

These pronunciation features included the following:

1) Pronunciation of "ye," or [e$^i$] in the first pre-stressed syllable after soft consonants:

*[л`е$^u$]нтяев, [н`е$^u$]вестка, [н`е]лепо, ма[т`е]рьялов, [с`е$^u$]рьёзный, [т`е$^u$]бе, у[м`е$^u$]реть*

[l`e$^i$]nt`yajev, [n`e$^i$]v`estka, [n`e$^i$]l`epo, ma[t`e$^i$]r`jalov, [s`e$^i$] r `joznyj, [t`e$^i$]b`e, u[m`e$^i$]r `et`

(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

2) Pronunciation of mid-low or mid vowels in the first pre-stress syllable after hard [a$^ъ$]:

*гов[а$^ъ$]рила, з[а$^ъ$]был, х[а$^ъ$]тел, п[а$^ъ$]клон, п[а$^ъ$]ртрет*

gov[a$^ъ$]r`ila, z[a$^ъ$]byl, h[a$^ъ$]t`el, p[a$^ъ$]klon, p[a$^ъ$]rtr`et

(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

3) Pronunciation of the sound [a] in the post-stress inflection of verbs of the 3$^{rd}$ person in the plural of the 2$^{nd}$ conjugation:

*хо[д`ат], лю[б`ат], ку[р`ат], стро[jат]ся, сер[д`ат]ся, прихо[д`ат]*

ho[d`at], l`u[b`at], ku[r`at], stro[jat]s`a, s`er[d`at]s`a, pr`iho[d`at]

(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

4) The pronunciation of *щ* as [ш`ч`]:

*учили[ш`ш`]е, воб[ш`ш`]ем, е[ш`ш`]ё, и[ш`ш`]ешь*

uchil`i[sh`sh`]e, vob[sh`sh`]em, e[sh`sh`]o, i[sh`sh`]esh

(does not correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

5) The pronunciation of hard labial consonants at the end of the word or before [j]:

*восе[м], се[м], се[мjа]*

vos`e[m], s`e[m], s`e[мja]

(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

6) The lack of assimilative softness of consonants:

*е[ст`]ественный, боле[з`н`]и, пе[н`с`]ия, слабо[с`т`], ко[нф`е]тки, ве[з`д`]е, е[с`т`], ра[зн`]ица, [с`н`]ять, [дв`]ерь, [вм`ес`т`]е, [з`д`]есь, обла[с`т`], е[з`д`]или, жи[з`н`]*

e[st`]estv`enyj, bol`e[z`n`]i, p`e[n`s`]ija, slabo[s`t`], ko[nf`e]tk`i, v`e[z`d`]e, e[s`т`], ra[zn`]itsa, [s`n`]at`, [dv`]er`, [vm`es`t`]e, [z`d`]es`, obla[s`t`], e[z`d`]il`i, zhi[z`n`]

(does not correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in a number of cases);

7) Pronunciation of soft velars in endings of full adjectives of the male gender of the nominative case:

*малень[к`ий], одино[к`ий], старчес[к`ий], славнень[к`ий], корот[к`ий]*
mal`en`[k`ij], od`ino[k`ij], starches[k`ij], slavn`en`[k`ij], korot[k`ij]
 (corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

8) Pronunciation of soft consonants in the reflexive postfixes of *-ся* and *–сь*:

*старал[с`]а, помещали[с`], остало[с`а], бросило[с`], взял[с`а], согласила[с`], дел[са], встретили[с], влюбил[с`а], докатило[с`], встречала[с`], учил[с`а], родил[с`а], остала [с`], родила [с`]*
staral[s`]a, pom`eshchal`i[s`], ostalo[s`a], bros`ilo[s`], vz`al[s`a], soglas`ila[c`], d`el[sa], vstr`et`il`i [s], vl`ub`il`[s`a], dokat`ilo[s`], vstr`echala[s`], uchil[s`a], rod`il[s`a], ostala[s`], rod`ila[s`]
 (corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in most cases);

9) Lack of assimilation in reflexive forms of verbs:

*говори[тс`а], плачу[тса], разрешае[тса], называю[тса], останe[тса], показа[ца], хоче [тса], вери[ца], заступи[тса], хоче [тса]*
govori`[ts`a], plachu[tsa], razreshaje[tsa], nazyvaju[tsa], ostan`e[tsa], pokaza[**ц**a], hoche [tsa], v`er`i[**ц**a], zastup`i[tsa], hoche [тса]
(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

10) Pronunciation of *зж* within the root as [жж]:

*прие[ж`ж`]ать, по [зж]е, прие[зж`]ает, прие[жж]ающие, вые[ж`ж`]ают, прие[жж]ал , по [жж]е, уе[жж]ать, прие[зж]ие, пое[зж]ай*
 prij[zh`zh`]at`, po [zzh]e, pr`ije[zzh`]ajet, pr`ije[zhzh]ajush`sh`ije, vyje[zh`zh`]ajut, pr`ije[zhzh]al , po[zhzh]e, uje[zhzh]at`, prije[zzh]ije, poie[zzh]aj
(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in most cases);

11) Pronunciation of the words *кто, что, никто as* [кто], [что], ни[кто]:

*[кто], ни[кто], [что] [што], [ч`о], ни[что]*
[kto], n`i[kto], [chto] [shto], [cho], n`i[chto]
(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in most cases);

12) Pronunciation of the combination *чн* at the juncture of root and suffix as [чн]:

*коне[шн]о и коне[чн]о, моло[чн]ая, яи[шн]ица, части[чн]ые, прили[чн]ая, то[чн]о, уда[чн]о*
kon`e[shn]o и kon`e[chn]o, molo[chn]aja, jai[shn`]itsa, chast`i[chn]yje, prili[chn]aya, to[chn]o, uda[chn]o
(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in most cases);

13) Pronunciation of the word *дождь* as [дошт`], the word *дождя* as [дажд`а]:

*до[жд`а]*
do[zhd`a]
(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

14) Pronunciation of [кк] in the word *легко* and its derivatives:

*ле[хк]о, ле[к]че, ле[хч]е*
l`e[hk]o, l`e[k]che, l`e[hch]e
(does not correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard);

15) Pronunciation of hard [c] in the word *отсюда:*

*от[с`у]да, от[су]да*
ot[s`u]da, ot[su]da
(corresponds to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in a number of cases).

These pronunciation variants found in the speech of Russian emigrants in Harbin are characteristic for the pronunciation standard that formed in the Russian-speaking environment of Harbin in the first half of the 20th century. Most of the pronunciation variants (12 out of 15) correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 13) or correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in most cases (8, 10, 11, 12 and 15); one of the 15 variants does not correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard in a number of cases (6), and two of the 15 variants do not correspond to the Petersburg pronunciation standard (4 and 14).

## 4 Discussion

Many memoir sources, and also publications in the post-emigrant periodic press stated that in Harbin, the Russian emigrants spoke "the speech of Petersburg:"

> […] they were people who not only preserved the cultural Russian heritage, but also the pre-revolutionary everyday culture, and they also preserved the pre-revolutionary Russian speech in all its purity and charm, and were able to pass this on to their children, and even to their grandchildren. They knew the literary Russian language, and many of them had the Petersburg pronunciation. The majority were representatives of the elite and literary types of speech culture (Raian, 2005).[8]

Other researchers also wrote about this (Dzemeshkevich, 1998; Taut, 2001). However, these statements lacked scientific justification. A thorough analysis of the

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[8] In the original: "eto ljudi, kotorye sohranili ne tol'ko kul'turnoe russkoe nasledstvo, no i dorevoliucionnuiu bytovuju kul'turu, oni takzhe sohranili dorevoliucionnyii russkiii iazyk vo vseii ego chistote i prelesti i sumeli peredat' ego svoim detiam i dazhe vnukam. Oni znali literaturnyii russkiii iazyk, i u mnogih iz nih bylo peterburgskoe proiznoshenie. Bol'shinstvo byli predstaviteliami elitarnogo i literaturnogo tipov rechevoii kul'tury."

speech of the last Russian emigrants in Harbin through the method of social and speech portraiting, combined with information on the history of Russian literary pronunciation and its evolutionary development provides a scientific explanation of this phenomenon: the emergence and existence of the Petersburg pronunciation standard in China, in the emigrant city of Harbin, geographically remote from Petersburg.

The eastern diaspora, including the diaspora in Harbin, was generally recognized for "the culture of pronunciation," right up until the Russians left China; the preservation of the language and pronunciation was later observed in the speech of the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin, and in the Russian speech of former Russian Harbin residents who emigrated later to other countries: Australia, the USA, and Brazil. The model of pronunciation and the standard for imitation in Harbin was the speech of educated people who came to build the CER in China. There were many people from Petersburg among the Harbin residents of the first wave who came to build the railroad: engineers, doctors and teachers who had received an excellent education in Russia and created a cultural environment in Harbin which acted as a model in many respects, including a model for good, literate speech for the rest of the rather diverse Russian population of Harbin. The second, post-revolutionary wave from Russia also added a large number of educated people to the Russian population of Harbin, primarily from the elite of large provincial cities of Siberia and the Far East. Throughout the entire existence of Russian Harbin, this standard was maintained in Russian high schools, and then in Russian tertiary education institutions.

Thus, we may say that the Petersburg pronunciation standard in Harbin appeared along with its original bearers from Petersburg, and then was spread as the standard, and maintained deliberately. However, this deliberate maintenance of the standard, although it may be a very effective act, especially if it takes place at a distance from the center when native speakers understand the need for ethnic self-preservation, still requires support by factors of an objective nature.

The Petersburg pronunciation is usually defined as literal, pedantically bookish: "the bookish pronunciation of Petersburg reduces the divide between written and spoken Russian." (Panov, 2002)[9]

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[9] In the original: "knizhnoe proiznoshenie Peterburga umen'shaet propast' mezhdu russkim pis'mom i proiznosheniem."

The Russian population of Harbin had a diverse social composition: besides representatives of privileged groups, highly-educated people and the intelligentsia, it included people from different social groups, representing various regions of the country. The pronunciation variant that was close to the literary one was maintained in Harbin society, as only this variant could unite all the Russian speakers who came to Harbin and had regional and social peculiarities in their speech. The orthoepic standard in the metropole also gradually brought pronunciation closer to the literary one, which was reflected in the rejection of Moscow pronunciation variants in favor of Petersburg ones.

Taking all of the above into account, we may conclude that the pronunciation standard in Harbin had its own special features, and this was shown in the distribution of possible pronunciation variants. The variants that dominated coincided with the Petersburg variants, and with those that subsequently came to characterize the common pronunciation standard of Russian – the modern standard. A common feature of these variants was that they were close to the literary pronunciation. This Harbin variant of Russian later spread in emigrant communities in other countries such as Australia, Brazil, the USA and Canada, where it continued its existence among other languages with a greater demographic and communicative capacity.

**Conclusion**

The present work used social and speech portraiting as a method of studying the Russian language in emigration, which made it possible to reveal the common features characteristic for the Russian speech of Harbin and establish the pronunciation features of this speech in the 20th century. This speech variety was later distributed to other countries together with emigrants who left Harbin. The results obtained in speech portraiting of the last representatives of the Russian diaspora in Harbin showed that the development of the Russian pronunciation standard in the eastern diaspora, in China, moved in the same direction as the development of the Russian pronunciation norm in the metropole – towards becoming closer to the literary, bookish pronunciation.

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