American Russian: An Endangered Language?

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Abstract

This paper has two goals: to establish across-the-board differences between a full language and a semi-language, and to propose a method of estimating language attrition. The data come from American Russian (a dramatically reduced version of Russian spoken in the United States of America). American Russian cannot be defined solely on geographical grounds: not all Russian speakers who live in the USA can be identified as speakers of American Russian. Rather, American

American Russian is shown to differ significantly from varieties of Russian spoken by subjects who maintain full language competence
which is compared to full Russian. The paper demonstrates a correlation between vocabulary loss and attrition in grammar and syntax of American Russian. Based on this correlation, the paper introduces a compact method of estimating overall language attrition. Representation of attrition as a continuum is proposed, similar to the continuum models accepted in creole studies. The morphology and syntax of American Russian are shown to differ, in a significant manner, from morphology and syntax of full Russian. The paper demonstrates syntactic and morphological parallels between American Russian, on the one hand, and extended pidgins and early creoles, on the other, and proposes an explanation for these parallels.

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This paper examines structural consequences of language attrition and the correspondences between language-particular and cross-linguistic phenomena under attrition. It also demonstrates the correlation between lexical attrition, on the one hand, and attrition in morphology and syntax, on the other. Based on the correspondence between language attrition in lexicon and grammar, the paper proposes a vocabulary-based method of measuring language attrition. The crucial data introduced here come from instances of lexical, morphological, and syntactic attrition as they occur in one particular language, American Russian. American Russian is compared to the full version of Modern Russian and then to pidgins and creoles. The parallels that are established between extended pidgins and American Russian, a language undergoing attrition, suggest that reduced communication is systematically reflected in the linguistic structure.

The paper has the following structure: in the introduction, two types of language disappearance are discussed; basic terms are clarified, and elicitation techniques used in this study are described. Section I introduces the method of estimating language proficiency and describes the speakers selected by this method. Section II presents structural characteristics of attrition in morphology, syntax, and discourse. Section III demonstrates the correlation between lexical and morphological/syntactic attrition, concluding that the proposed method of measuring lexical proficiency can reveal a general level of language competence. Section IV compares the structural characteristics of language loss and pidginization and proposes an explanation for the observed parallels. The major findings of the paper are summarized in the conclusion.

Introduction

1. The problem of endangered languages. Endangered languages are usually thought of as those with small communities of speakers who have been exposed to a catastrophic environment, a competing community that is more aggressive culturally or economically, or to political pressure. All this is true, but there can be other cases when the language becomes endangered: a part of a large and healthy speech community can move to a different environment, where their language is no longer the one of economic, social, political, or cultural prestige and where another language is dominant. In this new setting, the community loses regular contact with the original speech community and adopts, fully or partially, the dominant language. Accordingly, the notions of healthy and ailing languages are only relative: one language can be dominant under one set of circumstances and endangered under other circumstances.

The difference between the clear case of complete disappearance and the disappearance of a language that remains spoken elsewhere is probably most relevant for linguists. If a language is spoken in just one environment and is gradually disappearing in that environment, it certainly requires a salvage study. In this salvage study, however, a linguist should bear in mind that the language may already have features that characterize it as dying. In particular, the remaining speakers of the language may have been exposed to another, dominant, language for some time, and their language has changed because of the interference; at a yet later stage when only a single speaker remains, there is no longer a speech community to test that speaker's intuitions. Thus, unless a healthy version of a dying language exists elsewhere, the language that is studied cannot be compared to a full system. As a consequence, it may be impossible to decide if some features in this language pertain to its 'original' linguistic structure or result from the reduction in the use of that language. This

possible diversion should be borne in mind under a salvage study; however, there is no way to resolve this problem.

If, on the other hand, a language is spoken in several separate environments, the linguistic description can benefit from comparing the different variants. A comparison between the variants of the same language, one used as a dominant language, and another used as secondary to a different dominant language is particularly interesting because it allows one to distinguish those linguistic features that arise under limited communication and are, therefore, characteristic of language disappearance.

If such a comparison is possible, it can give promising results in a dynamic study: the disappearing variant of a language is compared to the stable variant of the same language. This is what is done in this paper, which compares Russian as spoken by semi-speakers in the US to the 'baseline' Russian language.

2. Basic terms. Throughout the paper, the following terms are used. The term attrition is used as the most general term denoting incomplete language competence which may be due to various factors such as first language loss, incomplete acquisition, pidginization, and probably some other factors. A language that undergoes attrition is called reduced and is opposed to a full language, i.e., the language characterized by full conventionalized knowledge. (There are other terms used to refer to restricted language competence, as well; it is beyond the goals of this paper to evaluate them, though a uniform terminology would definitely benefit the field.) Language death is the end result of language attrition, though language death can also be instant, due to the physical disappearance of all the relevant speakers (Campbell & Muntzel, 1989: 182-183; Menn, 1989; Wurm, 1991).[1]

As the paper will discuss different variants of Russian, it will maintain the distinction between Full Russian and American Russian. To describe the difference between these variants, two binary notions will be used: first/second language and

primary/secondary language. The first and second language are distinguished by the temporal order of acquisition. The primary and the secondary language are distinguished by the prevalence of usage. Thus, if an individual learns language A as his/her first language and speaks it predominantly throughout the adult life, this language is both first and primary. If an individual dramatically reduces the use of his/her first language A and switches to using language B as a more important one, then A is characterized as the first/secondary language, and B becomes this person's second/primary language.

Full Russian is defined as the language spoken in the former Soviet Union by those communities in which it is the first and primary language. Importantly, Full Russian is understood in a broader sense than Contemporary Standard Russian. Thus, Full Russian includes different lectal variants, not necessarily spoken on territories populated by ethnic Russians; for example, it includes Russian as spoken in Ukraine or Central Asia. Of course, Contemporary Standard Russian is also included in Full Russian.**expand on FR**

American Russian is the first language that becomes secondary; it is spoken by those who acquired it as their first language and then switched to English as their primary language. Importantly, the degree of attrition in American Russian varies across individual speakers: for some, it is a well-maintained secondary language, while others can be described at best as semi-speakers. This paper concentrates on those speakers who demonstrate a higher degree of attrition. However, they co-exist with more fluent and competent speakers who do not demonstrate the significant structural changes discussed below.

There is also another variant of Russian spoken in the US, Emigr Russian, defined as the Russian language as spoken in North America by the first generation of immigrants, who grew up speaking Full Russian and came to America as adults. For these speakers, Russian remains their first and often primary language; thus, the

distinction between Full and Emigr Russian is rooted in territorial criteria. For a description of Emigr Russian, see (Benson. 1957; Andrews. 1993a; 1994; Polinsky. 1995).

In the previous treatments of Russian in America (Wells. 1932; Benson. 1957, 1960; Andrews, 1990), the terms Emigr Russian, Immigrant Russian and American Russian are used without much distinction. Thus, Benson speaks of Immigrant Russian press (Benson, 1957) and American Russian (Benson, 1960). The latter work seems to include data on both Emigr Russian and American Russian though no clear distinction is made.[2] Polinsky (1995) introduces the distinction and describes characteristic features of Emigr Russian.

3. Elicitation techniques. Dealing with a reduced language poses certain problems unanticipated in a more traditional fieldwork setting where the linguist deals with a full language. This section describes the elicitation techniques used in this study and focuses on the special problems that arise with regard to a reduced language.

Full language fieldwork relies heavily on acceptability judgements where the speaker is presented with several linguistic expressions and is asked to determine which expressions are ill-formed, which are marginal, and which are good/best. This can be done either directly, by asking the speaker to express their opinion of the expression or by using the paraphrase technique when the speaker is asked to say something in a different way and to comment on the appropriateness of each expression. Expanding this type of database eventually leads to the core of a comprehensive grammar; acceptability judgements elicited from full speakers also shed some light on style and language norm. Another fieldwork technique commonly used with full languages, especially at the initial stages of fieldwork, is elicitation of translation equivalents. Finally, full language fieldwork is based on direct elicitation of data, in narrative texts and in a conversational setting.

Of these three basic techniques, the first two are virtually impossible in working with a reduced language. Unlike competent language speakers, speakers of a reduced language cannot be accurately tested for use of ungrammatical forms or for acceptability judgements. If asked ‘Can you say so...?’ or ‘Is the following correct?’, speakers usually agree unless some very basic principle of grammar is violated. To illustrate this, let us present an interview where an American Russian speaker J[3] was offered a melee of non-normative, marginal, and clearly ungrammatical expressions. At the time of the interview, J was 25 years old and had lived in the US for 14 years. The interview done in English and Russian. Below, translations are given only for the Russian components of the interview. A commentary on some forms follows the interview transcription.

(1) interviewing an American Russian speaker, 25 years old, female, b. in Moscow; US resident for 14 years (I - investigator; S - speaker; numbers indicate lines)

1 **I:** could you say in Russian
ja vsegda zdes´ ku•saju?
I always here eat
‘I always eat here.’

2 **S:** da, ja ku•saju
yes I eat
‘Yes, you can say ‘I eat’.’

3 **I:** how about
ja vsegda zdes´ em?
I always here eat
‘I always eat here.’ (a different word for ‘eat’)

4 **S:** that’s OK

5 **I:** which one do you prefer, which one would you say more often?

6 **S:** I don't know, people say both, I don't care

7 **I:** can you say

poku•sav, u menja zabolel •zivot?

having eaten by me began to ache stomach

'Having eaten, I got a stomach ache.'

8 **S:** yeah

9 **I:** what do you think of

sin-ij pal´to?

blue-MASC coat:NEUTER

'blue coat'

10 **S:** that's fine

11 **I:** a sladk-oe kofe?

and sweet-NEUTER coffee:MASC

'What about 'sweet coffee'?'

12 **S:** sure

13 **I:** how about

ty duma-et, •cto ja govor-i•s´ gluposti?

2SG think-3SG:PRES that 1SG say-2SG:PRES foolish things

'You think that I am saying foolish things.'

14 **S:** no,

on duma-et # ja govor+ju

3SG think-3SG:PRES 1SG say-1SG:PRES

'He thinks that I am saying..."

15 **I:** which form do you prefer:

vy prav or vy pr va or vy pr vy?

'You(fem. sg.) are right.'

16 **S:** I don't know

17 **I:** have you ever heard any of these?

18 **S:** I don't recall

19 **I:** what's better: p njala or ponjal ?

'understood (past fem.)'

20 **S:** both are OK

21 **I:** could you say

ja videl nikogo?

I saw noone

'I didn't see anybody.'

22 **S:** I don't know# ja videl nikogo # something is missing here

23 **I:** could you say ja pobedju?

'I'll win.'

24 **S:** like 'I'll win'? yes

25 **I:** do you have any preference regarding the following three phrases:

exat' v avtobuse, na avtobuse, avtobusom?

go in bus:PRP on bus:PRP bus:INSTR

'go by bus'

26 **S:** I don't know

This interview, which was used as part of a standard preliminary interview with all speakers, tests several grammatical features, some of which are indicative of core grammar and others pertain to finer grammatical, lexical, and phonological points. Standard Russian has obligatory gender agreement between the adjective and the noun in the singular; obligatory agreement between the subject and the verb in person (non-past) and in gender (past); obligatory double negation, where the negative pronoun cannot be used without the verb in the negative. These features

were tested in the interview in the following way: in line 9, the investigator presents a sequence with a violation of the adjective-noun agreement (the adjective is in the masculine, the noun is neuter); in line 13, the investigator presents a sequence with the violation of verbal agreement (the first verb is 3 person singular, and the pronoun is second person singular; the second verb is second person singular, and the pronoun is first person singular); in line 21, the investigator presents a sequence with a violation of double negation (the verb is in the affirmative and a negative pronoun nikogo is used). All three sequences would be declared ungrammatical by any speaker of Full Russian.

J, however, accepts the violation of adjective-noun agreement (line 10). She corrects the violation of verbal agreement (line 14); interestingly, here she keeps the form of the verb and changes the personal pronoun from second to third person; this is unnatural from the viewpoint of parsing and suggests that she does not retain the entire sequence well enough. (Five speakers of Full Russian who were interviewed in the same manner all started with the personal pronoun on and corrected the form of the verb.) Finally, though she feels some inadequacy of the example in line 21, J is unable to correct it (line 22). This indicates that at least part of J's core grammar is lost.

Expectedly, J accepts deviations from Full Russian in more peripheral phenomena, for example in the control of the gerund clause. Standard Russian requires that the subject of the gerund be controlled by the subject of the main clause (Rappaport, 1984). In the ungrammatical example in line 7, repeated in (2a), the underlying subject of the gerund is 'I' and the subject of the main clause is 'stomach':

(2) a. *Ø poku•sav u menja zabolel •zivot

Ø having eaten by me began to hurt stomach

lit.: 'Having eaten, my stomach began to hurt.'

In (2b), which presents the grammatical version of (2a), the two subjects are coreferential:[4]

(2) b. Ø poku•sav ja po•cuvstvoval bol' v •zivote

Ø having eaten I felt pain in stomach

'Having eaten, I developed a stomach ache.'

Note that J accepts the example in line 7.

Similarly, the noun kofe, which is masculine according to Russian normative grammars but which has the form of a neuter noun, is treated as neuter by many speakers of Full Russian. J accepts the sequence where kofe appears as a neuter noun (line 11). In line 23, the investigator uses the verb pobedit' 'win' in first person singular, a form that this verb does not have (Wade, 1992: 245). J, however, accepts this form.

Finally, several examples throughout the interview indicate that it is virtually impossible to elicit J's acceptability judgements. She is offered different variants in lines 1 and 3 (two different verbs 'eat'), 15 and 25; in these cases, she accepts all variants.[5]

Acceptability judgements, therefore, are of little help in fieldwork on a reduced language. Translational elicitations also prove futile because American Russian speakers lack the vocabulary necessary for translations.

This leaves the linguist working on this type of language situation mostly confined to observation. In other words, the most efficient and probably the only way

to record the language is to record spontaneous speech. However, such elicitation is not without difficulties, either. With American Russian speakers, it was very difficult to elicit a sizeable and coherent narrative. The best solution found in this study was the retelling of a book or a movie; because the informants in this group were fairly young, the life story narrative, which usually works well with older speakers, did not prove particularly useful. The other choice was the discussion of the generation gap and the speakers' differences with their parents.

In addition to the interviews conducted by the investigator, the speakers were followed in two other types of environment: conversations with other American Russian speakers and conversations with people who spoke primarily Russian (usually the speakers' relatives). Only the spoken language was studied.

The next section discusses the procedure used in the selection of subjects and the characteristics of the American Russian speakers involved in this study.

I. Proficiency as a criterion for the selection of speakers

1. Estimating proficiency. Proficiency is understood here the level of linguistic knowledge as represented in the command of the vocabulary; proficiency is distinguished from competence– the overall set of internal rules, phonological, lexical and structural, that enables a person to speak and understand a language.

It is fairly easy to assess the linguistic competence of someone who speaks a language well-known to the investigator; such assessment is based on intuition. However, the real problem lies in assessing competence in objective terms and also assessing competence in a language the linguist does not know well.

To formally assess their language proficiency, the speakers were asked to translate 100 words of the basic vocabulary list (the Swadesh list; see Table 1) from English into Russian. The number of correct translations was taken as a measure of an individual's proficiency in Russian. The list of correct translations was established

using a comprehensive English-Russian dictionary (Galperin, 1977); if an English word had several translations into Russian, the translation listed first was chosen. The resulting list, presented in table 1 below, was then rechecked in consultation with two speakers of Contemporary Standard Russian.

It has to be remembered that the English words in the basic vocabulary list are used as words of a metalanguage (to indicate this below, such words appear in quotes). If the speakers' primary language had been one other than English, the list would have appeared in that language. The way the concepts in English are listed in the tables below, one might consider some of them ambiguous (for example, 'bark'); this ambiguity is only superficial, and such words were presented to speakers with relevant explanations. Similarly, if an English word could be interpreted as a noun or as a verb ('drink', 'bite'), the speakers were informed beforehand which interpretation was requested. All the translations were elicited in the spoken form in a direct interview with the investigator. Where possible, visual support was given to make sure that the speaker understood the concept unambiguously.

The statistical procedure used to measure proficiency on the basis of the Swadesh list is very similar to the one employed in historical linguistics: the translations elicited from a given speaker are compared to the Full Russian list. One point is deducted for a wrong translation (e.g., 'liver' translated as po•cka 'kidney'; the correct translation is pe•cen') or for a blank answer. If a word is translated by the correct root form but the choice of the word form was wrong (for example, if the singular was translated as the plural), 0.5 is deducted.

The total number of wrong forms is then deducted from the number of items on the list (100); the result is taken as the numerical value of a speaker's proficiency. Thus,

(3) ESTIMATING PROFICIENCY BY THE BASIC VOCABULARY LIST (100 items)

wrong word = Ø;

no translation = Ø;

wrong form = Ø.5

100 - N_{wrong} = numerical value of linguistic proficiency

To illustrate this procedure, let us look at the test performance by the female speaker Le (the list of speakers is given in Table 2 below). This speaker failed to translate from English into Russian the words 'claw', 'liver', and 'bark'. She also translated 'grease' as maslo 'butter', instead of the correct •zir; instead of the correct est' 'eat', she used ku•sat' (a non-standard word, see fn. 4); and she translated 'seed' as z rny•sko 'little kernel', instead of the correct semja. Finally, she used the plural v•si, to translate the singular Russian 'louse'.

Another common deviation from Full Russian that Le also had is the choice of gender in the citation form of adjectives. Full Russian speakers, including young children, standardly use the masculine as citation form for adjectives; also, the masculine is invariably used by Russian dictionaries. Meanwhile, American Russian speakers apparently oscillate between the masculine, on the one hand, and the neuter (or feminine), on the other. To discuss this oscillation, we need briefly to review the phonology of Russian adjectival endings.

Russian has three genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter, and American Russian speakers retain most of the gender paradigm. However, if we ignore some dialectal varieties, the majority of Full Russian speakers do not distinguish between the pronunciation of the feminine and neuter adjectives with unstressed endings (Panov, 1967: 27ff.; Polinsky, 1995); thus in (4a, b):

(4) a. sinjaja [|sjinjəjə] ‘blue (fem.)’ - sinee [|sjinjəjə] ‘blue (neuter)’

b. malaja [|maləjə] ‘small (fem.)’ - maloe [|maləjə] ‘small (neuter)’

The distinction is easily perceptible in adjectives with stressed endings, as shown in (4c):

(4) c. bol’•naja [bolʲ|najə] ‘sick (fem.)’ - bol’•noe [bolʲ|sojə] ‘sick (neuter)’

The same pronunciation distinction is retained in the speech of American Russian subjects. Thus, at the elicitation of adjectives with unstressed endings, if a speaker did not use the masculine, it is impossible to determine which gender, feminine or neuter, was actually used. There is indirect evidence, coming from the adjectives with stressed endings, that American Russian speakers tend to use the neuter form, e.g., they use bol’s e ‘big (neuter)’; see also example (25a) below. However, it would be more accurate to characterize the non-masculine adjectives with unstressed endings as epicene. In Table 1 below, the epicene forms have a tilde in the place of the ending.

Le used the epicene, instead of the standard masculine, for the following adjectives: ‘long’, ‘red’, ‘yellow’, ‘green’, ‘white’, ‘black’; the fact that she used masculine to translate several other adjectives, e.g., ‘new’ and ‘big’, indicates that she has some concept of the right citation form. Overall, Le had the following deficiencies in the basic vocabulary list:

(5) a. 3 absent + 3 wrong + 7 wrong forms x 0.5 = 9.5.

b. proficiency: 100 - 9.5 = 90.5

Accordingly, Le’s proficiency in Russian was estimated at 90.5 per cent.

2. How basic is the basic vocabulary? Of course, the procedure described in section 1 has its drawbacks, some of which it shares with the basic vocabulary procedure as applied in historical linguistics. To anticipate possible criticisms, let me discuss three issues here. First, as was stated above, the goal of this study is to investigate language attrition at different levels of language structure, with special emphasis on grammar and syntax. One might object that the attrition in grammar and syntax would not necessarily correlate with lexical attrition, and it is the latter that the basic vocabulary technique is geared to. This correlation was empirically sustained, which in itself is one of the major findings of this study. This will be discussed below (section III).

Second, with regard to the procedure, one might object that there is a certain degree of arbitrariness in taking off points for the wrong citation forms; if Russian were compared with some language without a lexicographic tradition, this might become a hindrance. However, any language, either documented or not, has established citation forms for major word classes. In languages like Russian, these citation forms are codified by dictionaries; otherwise, citation forms can be easily established in interviews with fluent competent speakers. The very absence of a standard citation form indicates some dissociation from the dominant linguistic environment, and this can lead to attrition.

Third, the list used here was apparently designed for non-urban cultures; the speakers interviewed in this study commonly stumbled over words such as ‘bark’, ‘louse’ or ‘ashes’. Though these are not the most common concepts for a twenty-year old in New York or Chicago, any competent speaker of the language would have no problem translating these words into Russian. The interesting question, of course, is whether or not the most common gaps observed in the American Russian word lists can be somehow projected to wider applicability. To discuss this question, let us first

look at the actual discrepancies between the Swadesh lists in American Russian and in Full Russian. These are summarized in Table 1.

[Table 1 here]

The two major reasons for gaps in the Swadesh list are the lack of the right word or the misuse of the word form, in particular, the lack of knowledge of the citation form. Among the misused citation forms, the three most common cases seem to be the wrong form of the adjective (see above); the plural, instead of singular, form of the noun (e.g., v•si, instead of vo•s´ for 'louse'; u•si 'ears', instead of uxo 'ear'), and the incorrect aspectual form of the verb. With regard to the latter, the Full Russian citation form requires that the verb be given in the imperfective; meanwhile, American Russian speakers demonstrate significant variation between perfective and imperfective. Thus, verbs 'die', 'kill', 'say' were only used in the perfective (umeret´, instead of the imperfective umirat´, ubit´, instead of the imperfective ubivat´, and skazat´, instead of the imperfective govorit´). The oscillation between perfective and imperfective in citation forms of American Russian suggests that the category of aspect, which penetrates the grammatical system of Full Russian, becomes lexicalized in American Russian (see also below).

Possible reasons for the lack of words become clearer if we divide the American Russian word list into three groups: those concepts the words for which are the same as in Full Russian; concepts that allow some variation, and concepts that allow most variation. As the names in the first group do not change from Full Russian to American Russian, this group can be characterized as stable. To distinguish between the two other groups, a simple procedure was used: if the concept was rendered in American Russian by two different words, it was classified as allowing some

variation; concepts rendered by more than two words were classified as allowing most variation.

Unlike the procedure used for measuring proficiency, no points were deducted here for a wrong citation form; thus, the use of two different aspects for ‘swim’ (the iterative plavat´ and the unidirectional plyt´) counted as one form; the singular zub and the plural zuby for ‘tooth’ were treated as a single word. The absence of a translation counted as a (zero) word. The results of this classification allow us to distinguish between basic vocabulary items of highest stability, intermediary stability, and lowest stability. These groups are presented in Table 2.

[Table 2 here]

The stability of words can probably be explained in terms of the pragmatic importance of the respective concepts. Given that all the subjects interviewed in this study represent the urban environment, poor retention of words describing nature or animals is probably understandable (see Gonzo & Saltarelli, 1983, for similar observations based on the data from Immigrant Italian). However, there are significant parallels between stability of concepts in American Russian and in several creole languages, which are characterized by a different habitat. According to the lexical study of several pidgins and creoles (Belikov, 1987), Sranan, Jamaican Creole, Krio, Tok Pisin, Bislama, Haitian, Mauritian Creole, and Negerhollands are quite similar with regard to relative stability of the basic vocabulary concepts. In these languages, the concepts ‘long’, ‘root’, ‘seed’, ‘hot’, ‘bark’, ‘claw’, ‘louse’, ‘breast’, ‘liver’, ‘belly’, ‘grease’ are unstable, just as in American Russian. This similarity suggests that under restricted communicative circumstances characterizing both a reduced language and a pidgin or an early creole, the need for some concepts

may not arise till later, which explains the absence of such words or their ad hoc formation.

The fact that stable items in American Russian outnumber the two other groups suggests that the process of attrition is still in its relatively early stages: a large number of Full Russian lexical items are retained. Hypothetically, as language attrition progresses, the group of stable concepts would become smaller. However, this proposition needs to be examined further using data from several languages.

3. Speakers of American Russian. The speakers in this study were relatively young people, now in their twenties and thirties, who originally spoke Russian as their first language but for whom communication in Russian is now severely limited or is close to entirely passive. Thus, Russian has become their secondary language. For all these subjects, English is now their primary language. All the subjects consulted in this study speak Russian only when prompted and only as a second choice; thus, they would speak it to their parents or grandparents or to people whom they don't expect to speak English. Incidentally, they always use English with siblings, and the numerical results (see below) indicate a greater language loss for those children who grew up with siblings. With the exception of one case, the attitude towards the reduced language ranged between indifference and feeling of inferiority. Usually, no real stigma was attached to speaking Russian; sometimes the subjects even expressed the wish they spoke Russian better.

Though the sociology of American Russian is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important that the speakers in this study have had no exposure to Full Russian since their arrival in the US. (The speakers cannot write Russian at all; three people in the sample studied did not know Cyrillic, the rest had problems reading.) From the linguistic viewpoint, this presents a unique opportunity of studying a reduced language completely separated from its non-reduced variant.

The speakers left the Full Russian environment between the ages six and fourteen. The general policy of initial selection of speakers established the threshold age of exposure to Full Russian as twelve. However, one exception was made for a speaker who left Russia at 14 and who now speaks remarkably poor Russian. In this case, the speaker seemed to have some learning disabilities and probably could not maintain two languages simultaneously because of her limitations.

A note on code-switching and code-mixing is in order here. As will be obvious from the examples below, code-switching, even within a sentence, is a common phenomenon for American-Russian speakers, primarily because of their restricted Russian vocabulary. It is generally assumed that bilingual speakers can control code-switching, modifying its level to suit a specific communicative situation (on code-switching under attrition, see Seliger & Vago, 1991: 7, 10). American Russian speakers seem to lack this ability: there was no difference in the number of English words and expressions that were used in the speech addressed to another American Russian speaker, to the investigator, or parent/relative whose knowledge of English was viewed as very limited. The subject of the conversation seemed to be the only factor affecting the degree of mixing; thus, the number of English words definitely increased when the subjects spoke about their education or career and dropped when they spoke about their family.

If code-switching control may serve as a valid diagnostic of active bilingualism, American Russian speakers are definitely passive bilinguals. It would be interesting, however, to establish a statistical procedure that would allow us to measure code-switching effects, in particular by ranking vocabulary items, the content of an individual text, and the speech situation. Since such a procedure was not available in this study, code-switching phenomena were excluded from detailed analysis.

Since the degree of mixing was sensitive to the subject of the conversation, American Russian may reflect register variation. To determine this, however, one

needs more varied interviews than were available in this study. All in all, the speakers in this study were able to maintain a limited conversation on any topic, and this allows us to treat American Russian as a restricted language, not as a register.

The preliminary selection of American Russian speakers was based on the sample interview, similar to the one illustrated in (1) above, and on the proficiency assessment described in this section. On the basis of these criteria, 18 speakers were drawn from a larger pool of about one hundred speakers who underwent preliminary testing by the basic vocabulary technique described above. The speakers are listed in Table 3. As this table indicates, the highest proficiency in Russian was 90.5. This proficiency threshold was established based on the empirical evidence, where these speakers were compared to those with higher proficiency. Speakers with proficiency over 90 per cent did not demonstrate significant structural differences from speakers of Full Russian or Emigr Russian and were, therefore, rejected.

Another question concerns the lowest proficiency threshold: is such a threshold needed? Of all the subjects originally interviewed, only two could not speak any Russian whatsoever; both failed to translate over 70 words of the list, which indicated proficiency of about 30 per cent. One of these subjects arrived in the US from Moscow when he was seven years old; he was 23 at the time of the interview. The other speaker emigrated when he was nine and was 30 at the time of the interview. Both of them were unable to produce any sentences in Russian and could hardly understand spoken Russian. When asked to repeat simple sentences in Russian, they found it very difficult.

There were no speakers with intermediate proficiency, between 30 and 70, which of course may be the effect of the pool that was available here. All the subjects listed in Table 3 could construct Russian sentences and short texts and adequately reacted to questions in Russian.

[Table 3]

In addition to the older speaker (L) mentioned above, another remarkable speaker is N, who lost much of her Russian after having been in the US for only three years, due to the extremely high value she attaches to English and extremely low subjective assessment of Russian, which she viewed as a stigmatized language.

The next section describes lexical, grammatical and syntactic change in American Russian compared to Full Russian. Phonological and tonal differences between American Russian and Full Russian were not studied; some important comparisons can be found in (Andrews, 1993b).

II. Dimensions of attrition: American Russian

1. Lexicon. The major feature of the American Russian lexicon is its deficiency: speakers lack significant portions of the vocabulary, not only at the level of performance but also at the competence level, which finds its reflection in their inability to understand words or shades of meaning. The experiment with the basic vocabulary list already revealed significant gaps in the vocabulary of American Russian speakers. The absence of lexical items is compensated for by switching to English. Thus, the elicitations from American English speakers are full of English words. These words are not adopted into the Russian sound system but are pronounced as normal English words. Accordingly, we are dealing with extensive code-switching which is in general indicative of language loss.

Often the speakers know a Russian word passively but lack direct access to it. This inaccessibility results in the slow tempo of speech: it takes time for a speaker to recall the word. (Another reason for the slow tempo is the lack of grammatical confidence on part of a speaker.) In the time an average Full Russian speaker will usually say ten words, an American Russian speaker averages six. Slower pacing of

American Russian finds parallels in extended pidgins and early creoles, which differ from languages with the discontinuous tradition in a similar manner (M hlh usler, 1986: 151). According to M hlh usler , the reasons for this may be twofold: first, speakers of a pidgin are less certain of their communicants' proficiency and try to secure proper decoding by clearer and slower speech, second speakers are uncertain in their own language ability.

In addition to its relatively slow tempo, American Russian is characterized by numerous lengthy pauses between words, in particular between the elements of a single constituent. In (6a), (7a) below, pauses occur between the preposition and the nominal in the following examples (code-switched English words are unerlined):

(6) a. American Russian

moja sestra ona # u•cit v# elementary •skol-a

my sister she studies in elementary school-NOM

b. Full Russian

moja sestra u•cit-sja #v na•cal´noj •skol-e

my sister studies-REFL in elementary school-PRP

'My sister goes to elementary school.'

(7) a. American Russian

vsegda ja polu•cala As ot # tot professor

always I got 'A's from this:NOM professor:NOM

b. Full Russian

ja vsegda polu•cala pjaterki u to-go professor-a

I always got fives by this-GEN professor-GEN

'I always got 'excellent' grades from this professor.'

It is possible to explain the pauses in (6a), (7a) by the fact that the speaker is looking for a Russian word (incidentally, in both cases the speaker ends up switching to English).[6] Another outcome of the lexical inaccessibility is the misuse of words; see Table 1 for the incorrect translations of basic vocabulary items and also (8a), where the intransitive verb ‘to disappear, be lost’ is used instead of the transitive ‘to lose’:

(8) a. American Russian

•casto moja mama propadaet den´gi

often my Mom disappears money

b. Full Russian

moja mama •casto terjaet den’gi

my Mom often loses money

‘My mother often loses money.’

A common reason for the misuse of the word is the interference of English, especially if the Russian and the English words are cognates. In Full Russian, nervnyj ‘nervous’ can denote only a permanent characteristic, while the English cognate nervous may refer to a temporary state. The interference of the English word explains the misuse of nervnyj in (9a); as shown by (9b), Full Russian requires a verb, not an adjective, to describe a temporary state of nervousness:

(9) a. American Russian

segodnja on o•cen´ nervnyj

today he very nervous(ADJECTIVE)

b. Full Russian

on segodnja o•cen´ nervnicaet

he today very is nervous(VERB)

'He is very nervous today.'

The English character in the meaning 'personality in a drama, novel' corresponds to the Russian geroj 'hero'; the Russian word xarakter can only mean a set of traits that distinguish an individual. In American Russian, however, xarakter is used in the meaning of geroj.

The interference of English is even stronger in direct translations from English into Russian, for example:

(10) a. American Russian

oni byli v ljubvi

3PL were in love

b. Full Russian

oni ljubili drug druga

they loved each other

'They were in love.'

(11) a. American Russian

segodnja moja ma•sina ona ne na•cinalas´

today my car she not began

b. Full Russian

u menja segodnja ne zavodilas´ ma•sina

by me today not winded car

'My car wouldn't start today.'

The tendency to translate from English into Russian is also present in the use of discourse markers. American Russian speakers try to avoid English forms, with the exception of OK. Instead, they literally translate English discourse markers into Russian. Predictably, the following discourse markers and fillers occur: ty znae•s´ 'you know'; xoro•so/ladno 'well'; tak 'so'. Compare (12) with its English translation, where well is normal. In Full Russian, the word xoro•so is less desemanticized than the English well; accordingly, a sequence such as in (12) would be unacceptable because of the pragmatic conflict between the word xoro•so 'well-done; nice' and the word neudobno 'embarrassing'.

(12) American Russian

to budet # xoro•so# neudobnoe

this will be well embarrassing:NEUTER

'This will be, well, embarrassing.'

The description of lexical processes in American Russian given here is by no means exhaustive but it allows us to outline the major lexical characteristics of this variety, namely: code-switching (due to lexical gaps), incorrect use of words, and direct translation from English into Russian.

2. Morphology. The discussion of the grammatical system of American Russian begins with case distinctions. Full Russian maintains, under a simplified view, a six-case system (nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, instrumental, prepositional). American Russian abandons this case system; importantly, the loss of the case system is systematic and can be represented in terms of a case shift rule (see (48) below).

2.1. Loss of the instrumental. In Full Russian, verbs byt´ 'be', stanovit´sja 'become', ostavat´sja 'remain', umirat´ 'die', can assign either the nominative or the

instrumental case to the predicative nominal and predicative adjective (Comrie , Stone & Polinsky, 1995: 127ff.; Wade, 1992: 108), for example:

(13) a. Mocart byl kompozitor-ø
Mozat was composer-NOM
b. Mocart byl kompozitor-om
Mozart was composer-INSTR
'Mozart was a composer.'

These verbs and verbs of motion also take predicative adjectives, again either in the nominative or in the instrumental, as illustrated by (14a) and (14b) respectively:

(14) a. Mocart umer ni•s•c-ij
Mozart died poor-NOM:MASC
b. Mocart umer ni•s•c-im
Mozart died poor-INSTR:MASC
'Mozart died in poverty.'

With predicates in the future tense, Full Russian shows a preference for the instrumental case on the predicative nominal (Comrie et al., 1995: 117-122; Wade, 1992: 108; Timberlake, 1993: 862), thus:

(15) a. tot mal´•cik budet po•zarnik-om
this boy will be fireman-INSTR
b. ? tot mal´•cik budet po•zarnik-ø
this boy will be fireman-NOM
'This boy will be a firefighter.'

In American Russian, predicative nominals and predicative adjectives are always used in the nominative. For example, with the verb in the future (16) and with the potential (17), the predicative nominal is in the nominative; in (17), the second predicate also takes the adjective in the nominative:

(16) on budet zvezd-a
he will be star-NOM
'He will be a movie star.'

(17) ona xo•cet byt´ model´, i ona budet tonk-aja dlja eto
she wants to be model:NOM and she will be thin-NOM:FEM for that
'She wants to be a model and she is trying to lose weight for that.'

In standard Russian, the instrumental case is required for predicative nominals and predicative adjectives in the argument structure of such verbs as pomnit´ 'remember', znat´ 'know', zastavat´ 'find', s•citat´ 'consider', nazyvat´ 'name; call', predstavljat´sebe 'imagine', voobra•zat´ 'imagine', ostavljat´ 'leave behind', videt´ 'see', naxodit´ 'find', rastit´ 'raise; bring up', vospityvat´ 'bring up; educate', pose•s•cat´ 'visit' (Wade, 1992: 165). Structurally, these verbs can be analyzed as governing a small clause with the NP in the accusative and the VP in the instrumental. For example:

(18) a. my s•citali [$_{SC}$ejo sku•cn-ym •celovek-om]
we considered her:ACC dull-INSTR:MASC person-INSTR
'We considered her a bore.'

b. oni vospitali [$_{SC}$rebenk-a kaprizn-ym]
they brought up child-ACC capricious-INSTR

‘They brought up the child naughty.’

The construction illustrated in (18) is less frequent than the construction with the intransitive verb and predicative adjective or predicative nominal. In American Russian, the adjective in the transitive verb construction is invariably in the nominative:

(19) ja pomnju [$_{SC}$dedu•sk-u bol´n-oj]
I remember grandfather-ACC sick-NOM:MASC
‘I remember my grandfather sick.’

(20) tot gorod ja videl [$_{SC}$on grjazn-yj]
this city I saw it:NOM dirty-NOM
‘I saw this city dirty.’

Example (20) invites an alternative analysis, according to which the sentence results from the linkage of two coordinate clauses, as shown in (21):

(21) [$_{CP}$[$_{IP}$ tot gorod ja videl] & [$_{IP}$on grjazn-yj]]

If American Russian were not characterized by excessive and often unpredictable pausing (see above), the choice between the two possible analyses could be determined on the basis of the pause. However, since this cannot be done, both analyses, shown in (20) and (21) respectively, remain possible.

Assuming the small clause analysis of (20) is correct, this example points to two other features of American Russian, namely, the erosion of the accusative (the NP and the adjective in the small clause are in the nominative, unlike the respective forms in the full language, which must be in the accusative), and the elimination of

the null element (tot gorod governs on, while in the full language the trace must be empty). The accusative-nominative distinction is discussed in 2.3, below, and the absence of the empty trace is analyzed in 3.2 below.

In Full Russian, another common function of the instrumental is to encode the passive agent. In American Russian, no spontaneous passives were attested; even when translation elicitation was used, speakers translated English passives by active clauses. Thus, the English example in (22) was translated by (23a), which is an active sentence:

(22) This book was bought by Tanya

(23) a. American Russian

Tanja ona kupila ta kniga

Tanya she bought this:NOM book:NOM

b. Full Russian

Tanja kupila tu knigu

Tanya bought this:ACC book:ACC

'Tanya bought this book.'

This suggests that the passive construction, not just the coding of the passive agent, is lost.

Besides the predicative instrumental, some speakers of American Russian eliminate the instrumental governed by prepositions. However, since the loss of the prepositional instrumental is paralleled by loss of other oblique cases governed by prepositions, this process is discussed in the next subsection.

2.2. Development of the prepositional nominative. In Full Russian, prepositional phrases require that the noun be in one of the oblique cases: instrumental,

prepositional, dative, genitive, and accusative. Speakers of American Russian tend to replace these cases by the nominative.

Thus, speakers with lower proficiency levels (see Table 3 above) fail to use the instrumental with the prepositions s 'with' (24a) or pered 'in front of' (25a):

(24) a. American Russian

ja pridu s moj boyfriend (L, 84.5)

I will come with my:NOM boyfriend

b. Full Russian

ja pridu so svo+im molodym •celovek-om

I will come with self's+INSTR boyfriend-INSTR

'I'll bring my boyfriend.'

(25) a. American Russian

pered na•s dom est´ bol´•soe lawn (Ma, 74)

in front of our:NOM house:NOM is big:FEM/NEUTER lawn

b. Full Russian

pered na•s-im dom-om bol´•soj gazon

in front of our-INSTR house-INSTR big:MASC lawn

'There is big lawn in front of our house.'

Most American Russian speakers occasionally use instrumental forms, for example:

(26) a. v kitajskij restoran oni edjat palo•ck-ami

in Chinese:NOM restaurant:NOM they eat chopstick-INSTR:PL

'They use chopsticks when they eat in a Chinese restaurant.'

b. ja ploxo pi•su ru•ck-oj

I badly write pen-INSTR

'I write poorly with a pen.'

The use of a few instrumental forms suggests that they are retained not as elements of the respective nominal paradigm but as lexicalized adverbials. For instance, the use of ru•ckoj in (26b) does not necessarily mean that the respective American Russian speaker retains the paradigm or even parts of the paradigm of the nominal ru•cka 'pen'. This speaker is more likely to have, as separate lexical items, the non-declinable nominal ru•cka and the adverbial ru•ckoj. Similarly, some other prepositional phrases are also retained as adverbials.

The loss of the prepositional case is illustrated by the locative phrase in (26a), repeated in (27a) below:

(27) a. American Russian

v kitajsk-ij restoran

in Chinese-NOM restaurant:NOM

b. Full Russian

v kitajsk-om restoran-e

in Chinese-PRP restaurant-PRP

'in a Chinese restaurant'

Some other examples:

(28) a. American Russian

v universitet knig-i budet dorogo

in university:NOM book-NOM:PL will be:3SG expensively

b. Full Russian

v universitet-e knigi budut dorogie/dorogimi

in university-PRP books will be:3PL expensive:NOM:PL/INSTR:PL

'Books will be costly when you go to the university.'

(29) a. American Russian

moj dedu•ska byl na mirov-aja vojn-a

my grandfather was on world-NOM:FEM war-NOM

b. Full Russian

moj dedu•ska voeval/byl na mirov-oj vojn-e

my grandfather faught/was on world-PRP:FEM war-PRP

'My grandfather fought in World War [II].'

Some prepositional phrases retain the standard case form, for example, v dome 'in the house', na ma•sine 'by car', na velosipede 'by bicycle', v Moskve 'in Moscow', v Italii 'in Italy', v Rossii (in (32a) below). As the instrumentals, these forms seem to be lexicalized outside the respective nominal paradigm; thus, they function as adverbials.

Full Russian prepositions that assign the dative are also followed by the nominative in American Russian, thus:

(30) a. American Russian

i on po•sel k roditeli, foster parents

and he went to parents:NOM

b. Full Russian

i on po•sel k roditel+jam, k priemn-ym roditel+jam

and he went to parents+DAT:PL to foster-DAT:PL parents+DAT:PL

'And he went to the parents' house, to the foster parents' house.'

Full Russian prepositions governing the accusative also get the nominative, compare (31a) and (31b):

(31) a. American Russian

moja mama ona ezdila v Odess-a

my mom she went to Odessa-NOM

b. Full Russian

moja mama ezdila v Odess-u

my Mom went to Odessa-ACC

'My mother went to Odessa.'

The genitive after prepositions is also lost, for example, after bez 'without':

(32) a. American Russian

v Rossii onu dumajut # mo•zno le•cit´ bez vra•c

in Russia:PRP they think is possible be treated without doctor:NOM

b. Full Russian

v Rossii dumajut •cto mo•zno le•cit´sja bez vra•c-a

in Russia:PRP think that is possible be treated without doctor-GEN

'In Russia they think that one can be treated without a doctor.'

Overall, American Russian tends to replace prepositional obliques by nominative forms.

2.3. Attrition of the genitive. In Full Russian, the genitive has a large number of uses, which cannot be summarized in this paper (for a detailed discussion of genitive marking, see Chvany, 1975; Babby, 1980; Pesetsky, 1982; Mustajoki, 1985; Neidle,

1988). Of the numerous instances of genitive assignment, this paper will concentrate on the lexically governed genitive and genitive of negation.

In the standard language, the lexically governed objective genitive occurs mostly with verbs of emotional perception, aim, request, or achievement, as illustrated in (33):

(33) a. tri mesjaca on ne •zil, a li•s´ o•zidal arest-a

three months he not lived but only waited arrest-GEN

'He spent three months not really living but, rather, anticipating his own arrest.'

b. ja pro•su u vas sostradanij-a

I ask by 2PL compassion-GEN

'I am asking for your compassion.'

c. rebenok boitsja groz-y

child is afraid storm-GEN

'The child is afraid of thunderstorms.'

The verbs in (33) can also take an object in the accusative; this object has to be animate and/or highly definite. Thus, the choice between the accusative and genitive is determined by the definiteness/indefiniteness of the object. The acceptability of variation between the accusative and the genitive depends on the individual verb, compare (34b) and (34c):

(34) a. bylo jasno, •cto on o•zidal Marin-u/??Marin-y

was clear that he expected Marina-ACC/Marina-GEN

'It was clear that he had been expecting Marina.'

b. ja pro•su u vas et-u knig-u/ *et-oj knig-i vsego na dva dnja

I ask by 2PL this-ACC book-ACC/this-GEN book-GEN only for two days

'I am asking you to loan me this book just for two days.'

c. rebenok boitsja svo-ju u•citel´nic-u/ svo-ej u•citel´nic-y

child is afraid self's-ACC teacher:FEM-ACC/self's-GEN teacher:FEM-GEN

'The child is afraid of his/her teacher.'

In American Russian, the lexically governed genitive is lost to the nominative and, in more fluent speakers, accusative. For example:

(35) a. American Russian

ja •zdala plox-uju istori-ju (Le, 90.5)

I waited bad-ACC:FEM story-ACC

b. Full Russian

ja •zdala grustn-ogo sju•zet-a

I waited sad-GEN:MASC plot-GEN

'I was expecting a sad story (of a movie).'

(36) a. American Russian

v Chicago vse boitsja prestupnik-i

in Chicago all:PL is afraid:3SG criminal-NOM:PL

b. Full Russian

v •cikago vse bojatsja prestupnik-ov

in Chicago all:PL are afraid:3PLcriminal-GEN:PL[7]

'In Chicago, everybody is afraid of criminals.'

The genitive of negation is optional in Full Russian, where it varies with the nominative or accusative, depending on the grammatical relation of the respective nominal. However, the genitive of negation is obligatory after the negative existential predicate net/ne byt´, as shown by the contrast between (37a) and (37b):

(37) a. v dome net telefon-a
in home no telephone-GEN
b. *v dome net telefon-ø
in home no telephone-NOM
'There is no telephone in the house.'

American Russian loses the optional genitive of negation, as shown by (38a):

(38) a. American Russian
ja ne •citaju russkaja kniga
I not read Russian:NOM:SG book:NOM:SG
b. Full Russian
ja ne •citaju russk-ie knig-i/ russk-ix knig-ø
I not read Russian-ACC:PL book-ACC:PL/Russian-GEN:PL book-GEN:PL
'I don't read Russian books.'

As (39a) indicates, American Russian also loses the obligatory genitive of negation in the negative existential clause:

(39) a. American Russian

u ne net mu•z

by her no husband:NOM

'She has no husband.'

b. Full Russian

u ne net mu•z-a

by her no husband-GEN

'She has no husband.'

Example (39a) also includes the phrase u ne 'by her', where the pronoun is in the genitive. The u-phrase (the preposition u 'by, at' and the genitive nominal) is one of the few environments where the genitive is retained by American Russian speakers. In Full Russian, the u-phrase is particularly frequent because it encodes the possessor in the possessive construction with the existential verb 'be', as in (40):

(40) u pop-a byla sobak-a

by priest-GEN was dog-NOM

'A priest had a dog.'

American Russian speakers replace this possessive construction by a calque of the English have (Russian imet´), as in (41a) and (42a):

(41) a. American Russian

i ta •zen•s•cina ona imela sekretnaja •zizn´

and this woman she had secret:NOM life:NOM

b. Full Russian

u toj •zen•s•ciny byla tajnaja •zizn´

by this woman was secret life

c. Full Russian (less acceptable variant)

ta •zen•s•cina imela tajnuju •zizn´

this woman had secret:ACC life:ACC

'This woman had a secret life.'

(42) a. American Russian

ja ne imeju ma•sinu

I not have:1SG car:ACC

b. Full Russian

u menja net ma•siny

by me no car:GEN

c. Full Russian (less acceptable variant)

ja ne imeju ma•siny

I not have car:GEN

'I have no car.'

Another context in which the genitive is well-preserved is the genitive governed by the numeral: even the poorest speakers in my sample maintained the genitive when asked to count using a numeral and a noun. However, this form is retained because of its highly specialized function as a count form, determined by the genitive (Babby, 1984; Mel´•cuk, 1985: 27-34). In a sense, this retention can be compared to the adverbial-like retention of some prepositional phrases: the count form is not associated directly with the overall declension paradigm of a given noun.

2.4. Argument case shift. The main verbal arguments are commonly encoded by three cases: the nominative, typically assigned to subjects, the accusative, typically assigned to direct objects, and the dative, typically assigned to indirect objects. In American Russian, the dative is regularly replaced by the accusative, as in (43a), (44a), (45a).

(44) a. American Russian

ja prinesla tebja pictures

I brought 2SG:ACC pictures

b. Full Russian

ja prinesla tebe fotografii

I brought 2SG:DAT pictures

'I brought you pictures.'

(45) a. American Russian

papa rasskazal devo•ck-u istorij-u

Daddy told girl-ACC story-ACC

b. Full Russian

papa rasskazal devo•ck-e istorij-u

Daddy told girl-DAT story-ACC

'Daddy told the girl a story.'

(46) a. American Russian

ja pokazyvaju tebja moj-a sobak-a

I show 2SG:ACC my-NOM dog-NOM

b. Full Russian

ja poka•zu tebe svoj-u sobak-u

I will show 2SG:DAT self's-ACC dog-ACC

'I am going to show you my dog.'

The dative remains more or less stable with the first person pronoun, for example in (47a, b) (see also (52a) below).

(47) a. poka•zi mne tvoj dom

show me:DAT your house

'Show me your house.'

b. pozvoni mne zavtra

call me:DAT tomorrow

'Call me tomorrow.'

Better retention of the dative with pronouns may be indicative of a general tendency observed in different languages under attrition: pronominal paradigms are retained longer than the nominal ones.

The accusative is often replaced by the nominative: examples above are (23a), (36a), (38a), (41a), (46a). Thus, the argument case system of American Russian undergoes the following case shift:

(48) Dative ----> Accusative ----> Nominative (argument case shift)

This shift characterizes the changes undergone by the cases that encode major grammatical relations, in particular, the direct and indirect object (the subject case, which is mostly the nominative, remains unchanged). Other cases, which primarily encode adjuncts, also disappear, and their functions are assumed by the nominative. Thus:

(49) Genitive

Dative

Accusative ------> Nominative

Instrumental

Prepositional

As a result, American Russian develops a two-case system (nominative and accusative). While the nominative becomes the multifunctional case, the accusative is specialized as the case of the indirect object and in some cases is used to encode the direct object. American Russian also keeps a number of prepositional forms and the count form of the genitive but these seem to be fixed as lexical items rather than forms derived by regular case rules.

The important question, of course, is whether the dramatic reduction of cases in American Russian, compared to Full Russian, can be explained by the influence of English, with its extremely shallow case distinctions, or is due to the general process of language death (see Campbell & Muntzel, 1989 for similar examples of case loss). An ideal testing situation would be one where Russian is influenced by a language with a richer case system. If in such a hypothetical situation Russian speakers also used a reduced case system, language death processes would emerge as a valid reason for reduction. For the lack of such a testing situation, both solutions mentioned here remain entirely speculative.

2.5. Loss of verbal and nominal reflexives. Full Russian has verbal reflexive forms ending in -sja or -s´; it also has the reflexive nominal sebja and the possessive reflexive svoj. American Russian consistently eliminates reflexives. First of all, many verbs that have the reflexive ending are used without it, compare (50a) and (50b):

(50) a. American Russian

ja xo•cu posmotret´ mesta gde ja rodila-ø

I want see places where I was born

b. Full Russian

ja xo•cu posmotret´ mesta gde ja rodila-s´

I want see places where I was born-REFL

'I want to see the places where I was born.'

The verb rodit´, used in (50a), exists in Full Russian but only in the meaning 'to give birth', not 'to be born'. Some other examples:

(51) a. American Russian

tam my bludili-ø

there we lost our way

b. Full Russian

my tam zabludili-s´

we there lost our way-REFL

'We got lost there.'

The verb bludit´, used in (51a), is attested in Full Russian, but only in the meaning 'to sleep around; to be promiscuous', not 'to get lost'.

In (52a), the verb gotovit´ is used in the meaning to 'get ready for', while its Full Russian meaning is 'to cook; to prepare smth.'.

(52) a. American Russian

mne nado gotovit´-ø dlja finals

me:DAT necessary prepare-ø for finals

b. Full Russian

mne nado gotovit´-sja k kzamenam

me:DAT necessary prepare-REFLto exams

'I have to get ready for finals.'

Other example of the loss of the reflexive are given in (6a), where the verb u•cit´ (Full Russian 'to teach') is used instead of the verb u•cit´-sja 'to learn, to study', and

in (25a), where the verb le•cit´‘to treat’ is used instead of le•cit´sja ‘to obtain treatment’.

American Russian also uses the combination of a transitive verb and object in lieu of the Full Russian reflexive; this is apparently a manifestation of analyticism, characteristic of American Russian in general:

(53) a. American Russian

ja pri•cesyvaju moi volosy to•ze ve•cerom

I comb my hair also in the evening

b. Full Russian

ve•cerom ja to•ze pri•cesyvaju-s´

in the evening I also comb-REFL

‘I comb my hair in the evening, too.’

(54) a. American Russian

on ne umyval ego lico

he not washed his face

b. Full Russian

on ne umyval-sja

he not washed-REFL

‘He didn’t wash his face.’

Examples such as (53a), (54a), can also be explained by a direct influence of English where the object, in this case a body part, has to be expressed.

Some fossilized reflexive verbs that have no non-reflexive counterparts in Full Russian, are retained in American Russian. The speakers in this study consistently used smejat´sja ‘laugh’ (Full Russian *smejat´); ulybat´sja ‘smile’(*ulybat´); bojat´sja ‘be afraid of’(*bojat´), as in (36a) above; zabotit´sja ‘take care of’ (Full

Russian zabotit´ ‘to make someone worried’ is very rare and semantically removed from the reflexive), as in (58a) below.

The possessive reflexive svoj is consistently replaced by the regular possessive pronoun of the respective person. Thus, in example (46a) above, the possessive pronoun moja ‘my’ is used instead of the reflexive; in (47a), tvoj dom ‘your house’ is used in the place of Full Russian svoj dom ‘self’s house’. Next, compare (55a) and (55b):

(55) a. American Russian

oni govorit o egoi dela tol´ko

he speaks about his things only

b. Full Russian

oni govorit tol´ko o svoixi/egoj delax

he speaks only about self’s/his things

‘Hei speaks only about hisi own/hisj business.’

In Full Russian, the contrast between the possessive reflexive and the regular pronominal possessive can be used for reference-tracking in discourse (for details, see Padu•ceva, 1985: 180-200). In (55b), the contrast is between the coreferential interpretation of the reflexive and the non-coreferential interpretation of the non-reflexive possessive pronoun. Another example:

(56) a. Ivani pro•cital Petruj svoii/*j stixi

Ivan:NOM read Peter:DAT self’s poems

‘Ivani read hisi (Ivan’s) poems to Peterj.’

b. Ivani pro•cital Petruj egoj/*i stixi

Ivan:NOM read Peter:DAT his poems

'Ivani read hisj (Peter's) poems to Peterj.'

There were no spontaneous American Russian examples involving this contrast. Skepticism with regard to elicited judgements notwithstanding, example (56b) was invariably interpreted as ambiguous by American Russian speakers, with ego referring to either Ivan or Peter. The loss of the possessive reflexive can also be explained by the direct influence of English, where simple possessive pronouns are used. Incidentally, American Russian has a greater number of overt possessive pronouns, often in those cases where, in Full Russian, possession would remain unexpressed and would be recoverable from the context. For example, the sentence in (54a) above would sound more acceptable to a Full Russian speaker if lico 'face' appeared without any possessive pronoun, in which case the semantics of possession would be recovered from the context.

The only reflexive which is retained in American Russian, at least to a certain extent, is sebja 'self'. Its preservation is probably related to the influence of English oneself, because sebja occurs most commonly where the English counterpart is needed. However, sebja loses, partially or entirely, its nominal declension paradigm, as illustrated by (58a), where Full Russian requires the prepositional case (58b). Examples:

(57) a. American Russian

ja zastavljaju sebja •citat´ iz russkie knigi[8]

I make REFL read from Russian:NOM books:NOM

b. Full Russian

ja zastavljaju sebja •citat´ po-russki

I make REFL read in Russian

'I make myself read Russian books.'

(58) a. American Russian

moj brat on zabotitsja o sebja

my brother he cares about REFL

b. Full Russian

moj brat sam o sebe zabotitsja

my brother himself about REFL care

'My brother takes care of himself.'

Overall, the general decline of reflexive forms in American Russian poses an interesting question: can this loss of reflexives be explained entirely by the influence of English, where morphological reflexivity is less prominent than in Russian, or is this a more general tendency of human language, or both? An indirect argument in favor of the influence of English comes from American Swedish: while Full Swedish has a developed system of reflexive marking, American Swedish loses it (Hasselmo, 1974: 161).

The possible non-contact explanation of reflexive loss is supported by the observation that many of the world's languages do not have overt reflexives (for example, Austronesian languages, see Keenan, 1993). It is possible that the loss of reflexives under attrition would represent a shift towards the unmarked, basic situation which might be more representative of language universals than Indo-European overt marking of reflexivity.

2.6. Loss of the conditional. Full Russian has two basic conditional forms, a more frequent analytical form with the particle by, as in the second clause in (59) and in (60b), and the synthetic form that, in most variants of Full Russian, materially coincides with the modern imperative (Wade, 1992: 326-328). This form, illustrated in the first clause of (59), obligatorily precedes the subject.

(59) znaj ja to togda, ja by s nimi vstretilsja

know:COND I this then I COND.PRT with them meet:COND

'Had I known that then, I would have met with them.'

The synthetic form was not attested at all in American Russian. As for the analytical conditional, the tendency is to replace it with the respective indicative forms, as in (60a):

(60) a. American Russian

esli ja znal to, ja skazat´

if I knew this I say:INF

b. Full Russian

esli by ja znal to, ja by skazal

if COND.PRT I knew:COND this I COND.PRT say:COND:MASC

'If I knew this, I would say it.'

The loss of the conditional is paralleled by the loss of conjunction •ctoby (< *•cto + by) 'so that' which introduces subjunctive clauses. This conjunction is replaced by •cto 'that', which introduces indicative clauses. For example:

(61) a. American Russian

ja xo•cu •cto ty vstreti•s´ moj boyfriend

I want that 2SG meet my boyfriend

'I want you to meet my boyfriend.'

b. Full Russian

ja xo•cu, •ctoby ty poznakomilas´ s moim drugom

I want so that 2SG got acquainted:COND with my friend

‘I want you to meet my boyfriend.’

Some of the cases where •ctoby is replaced by •cto can be explained by the influence of English, where that can introduce both a clause in the indicative and some purpose clauses. However, examples such as (61a) cannot be directly traced back to English and confirm a more general tendency in the loss of the Russian conditional.

2.7. General increase in the use of analytical form. The loss of the synthetic conditional is part of a wider tendency to use analytical forms. American Russian clearly differs from Full Russian in the lack of synthetic forms expressing complex meanings; instead, American Russian uses analytical expressions consisting of several distinct components. The use of such expressions is particularly noticeable in the verbal lexicon. Thus, numerous Full Russian prepositional verbs are rendered in American Russian by combinations of the phase verb and notional verb. Compare (62a) and (62b); (63a) and (63b):

(62) a. American Russian

ona nikogda one ne na•cn t govorit´ ko mne pervaja

she never she not will begin to speak to me first:NOM

b. Full Russian

ona nikogda ne za+govorit so mnoj pervoj/pervaja

she never not INC+speak:FUT with me first:INSTR/first:NOM

‘She would never speak to me first.’

(63) a. American Russian

v Cleveland moja mama na•cala bolet´ i ona po•sla v hospital

in Cleveland my mom began to be sick and she went in hospital

b. Full Russian

v klivlende moja mama za+bolela i legla v bol´nicu

in Cleveland:PRP my mom INC+was sick and lay in hospital

'In Cleveland, my mother got sick and went to hospital.'

With regard to synthetic expression of nominal categories, spoken Full Russian seems to favor the analytical strategies as well. Thus the fact that no synthetic forms with the augmentative meaning were attested in American Russian is not significant: Full Russian speakers also prefer to use o•cen´ tolstyj 'very thick' instead of the synthetic tolstennyj, or ogromnyj dom 'huge house' instead of the synthetic augmentative domi•s•ce.

One distinct case where American Russian retains synthetic nominal forms is the retention of diminutives, particularly in the names of foods. This retention was more pronounced in the speech of those American Russian speakers who come from southern Russian families; diminutives were also observed in the speech of Ko, who grew up in Central Asia (Tashkent). For example:

(64) a. ja ne ljublju pa•stet-ik

I not like pat -DIM

'I don't like pat .' (M, from Kharkov)

b. moja sestra vsegda ona est mnogo varenj-ic-e

my sister always she eats much jam-DIM-NOM

'My sister always eats a lot of jam.' (Na, from Odessa)

In spoken Full Russian, diminutives are characteristic of the southern variant and also of adult speech addressed to children (Zemskaja, 1973: 54; 1981: 62). Meanwhile, example (64a) was recorded at the second meeting between the investigator and M, when we had lunch together. The use of the diminutive in such a formal setting suggests that the speaker was not aware of the pragmatic connotations

carried by the form. It is possible that the diminutive is the only form in which the names for pat and jam were retained by the respective speakers; hence, the diminutive semantics is no longer perceptible to them.

Such fossilized diminutives most likely occur in American Russian because speakers acquired them as young children and never reanalyzed them later. In the speech elicited from a young child attriter of Russian (Turian & Altenberg, 1991: 222-223), diminutive forms molo•cko 'milk', jablo•cki 'apples', no•zka 'leg', volosiki 'hair' occur as the only ones: the child repeats them as heard from his Russian-speaking parent.

2.8. Lexicalization of aspect. The increased use of analytical verbal forms is related to another important feature of American Russian grammar, namely, the lexicalization of aspect. Volumes have been written on Slavic aspect, and this paper makes no attempt to resolve the general problems of it. However, if we try to summarize the various views on the Russian aspect expressed in the literature, two major approaches can be distinguished. Under the first approach, aspect is viewed as a grammatical phenomenon, with the grammar somewhat marred by diachronic residues and lexical exceptions (Forsyth, 1970; Academy Grammar I: 583-596). According to the second approach, aspect is a lexical characteristic, with some degree of grammaticization (Bulygina, 1982; Comrie, 1976).

If American Russian can serve as a litmus test of any kind, Russian aspect is clearly a lexical category. The lexicalization of aspect is reflected in the replacement of the perfective/imperfective opposition by the opposition of telic versus atelic verbs. As a result, verbs no longer form aspectual pairs. Rather, they are either retained as separate entities or just one verb form, perfective or imperfective, is retained and the other is lost. The second strategy, when just one form of the verb is retained and the other is entirely lost, seems to be more common for American Russian; this strategy is consistent with the general reduction of the lexicon. Under

this strategy, the retention of a certain form is determined by the relative frequency of its use. This tendency can be demonstrated if we adopt Vendler's division of verbs into those of achievement, accomplishment, process, and state (Vendler, 1967). There is no question that this division is a very approximate one; a much finer set of distinctions capturing the aspectual semantics is suggested by Bulygina (1982). However, Vendler's four-way distinction is sufficient in providing a rough basis for the classification of the tendencies observed in American Russian.

In American Russian, verbs of achievement and accomplishment are clearly favored in the perfective form, hence the use of sdelat´ 'do', smo•c´ 'be able to', napisat´ 'write', pro•citat´ 'read', otdat´ 'give', vzjat´ 'take' in the place of their imperfective correlates. A number of similar examples were given in Table 1 above: the informants give the perfective, instead of the imperfective citation form, for 'know', 'die', 'kill', 'lie down', 'stand', 'give', 'say', 'burn'. Some other examples:

(65) a. American Russian

ja nikogda ne pro•cital ta kniga

I never not read:PERF this:NOM book:NOM

b. Full Russian

ja nikogda ne •cital tu knigu

I never not read:IMPF this:ACC book:ACC

'I have never read this book.'

(66) a. American Russian

ego otec sna•cala on otdal ego den´gi i potom on ne

his father first he gave:PERF him:ACC money and then he not

otdal

gave:PERF

‘His father was first ready to give him the money and then he changed his mind.’

b. Full Russian

ego otec sna•cala daval/otdaval emu den´gi..

his father first was giving:IMPF/was giving away:IMPF him:DAT money

On the other end of the perfective-imperfective opposition, verbs that do not imply a natural limit, such as processes and states, are lexicalized in the imperfective form. In (67a) below, the speaker is retelling a scene in a movie when a character hides for a moment by hanging outside the window:

(67) a. American Russian

on prjatalsja, on visel iz okna

he was hiding:IMPF he was hanging:IMPF out of window

b. Full Russian

on sprjatalsja, svesiv•sis´ iz okna

he hid hanging out of window

‘He was hanging outside the window, hiding.’

In (68a), the speaker comments on his short trip to Princeton:

(68) a. American Russian

mne nravilos´ v Princeton, no ja ljublju •zit´ v Chicago

me:DAT liked:IMPF in Princeton but I like to live in Chicago

b. Full Russian

mne ponravilos´ v Prinstone...

me:DAT liked:PERF in Princeton

'I liked Princeton but I would prefer to live in Chicago.'

The restructuring of aspectual characteristics is also reflected in the simplification of motion verbs. In Full Russian, motion verbs are opposed not only as perfective and imperfective but also, within each aspect, as unidirectional and iterative or multidirectional (Forsyth, 1970: 64; Academy Grammar I: 590-596). This is illustrated in (69) for the meaning 'to move, to go (in a vehicle)':

(69) a. imperfective

i. unidirectional

exat´

ii. iterative

ezdit´

b. perfective

i. unidirectional

poexat´

ii. iterative

s´´ezdit´

American Russian speakers lose the iterative correlates of the motion verbs; thus:

(70) a. American Russian

v voskresen´e ja exal v Washington s

in Sunday I went:UNIDIRECTIONAL in Washington with

moi druzja

my:NOM friends:NOM

b. Full Russian

v voskresen´e ja ezdil v Va•sington s druzjami

in Sunday I went:ITERATIVE in Washington with friends:INSTR

'On Sunday, I went to Washington with my friends.'

(71) a. American Russian

na etot boulevard ljudi begut

on this:NOM boulevard:NOM people run: UNIDIRECTIONAL

b. Full Russian

na tom bul´vare begajut ljudi

on this:PRP boulevard:PRP run:ITERATIVE people

'People jog on this boulevard.'

As far as the perfective-imperfective distinction is concerned, some speakers retain both aspects for unidirectional motion verbs; this was attested for speakers with higher proficiencies, namely: Ko, S, Zh, Le, N (proficiency range: 88.5-90.5, see Table 3). In (72a), the speaker correctly uses unidirectional imperfective expressing planned future action; however, he fails to use the right word, substituting idti 'go, walk' for exat´ 'go':

(72) a. American Russian

v avgust ja idu v Seattle

in August:NOM I walk in S

b. Full Russian

v avgust-e ja edu/poedu v Si tl

in August-PRP I go/will go in S

'I am going to Seattle in August.'

Speakers with the lowest proficiencies (Ma, Na, A, Sv; range: 74-77, see Table 3) were found to retain the perfective unidirectional verbs of motion, for example:

(73) a. American Russian

moj djadja •casto on priexal k nam v Brooklyn

my uncle often he came:PERF:UNIDIRECTIONAL to us in Brooklyn

b. Full Russian

moj djadja •casto priez•zal k nam v Bruklin

my uncle often came:IMPF:ITERATIVE to us in Brooklyn

'My uncle often came to see us in Brooklyn.'

(74) a. American Russian

vy ljubite idti v cerkov´?

2PL like go:IMPF:UNIDIRECTIONAL in church

b. Full Russian

vy ljubite xodit´ v cerkov´?

2PL like go:IMPF:ITERATIVE in church

'Do you like to go to church?'

The analysis of American Russian morphology given here is by no means complete. Based on the data available in this study, American Russian differs from Full Russian in greater overall use of analytical forms, lexicalization of parts of paradigms (for instance, prepositional cases) and lexicalization of aspectual forms, and in elimination of certain distinctions, both in nominal and verbal morphology.

3. Syntax. In the discussion of syntactic features of American Russian, a distinction will be made between those features that characterize clausal syntax and sentential syntax.

3.1. Clausal syntax. The two major differences between American Russian and Full Russian at this level involve verbal agreement and subject resumptive pronouns.

The term resumptive pronoun is used here to denote a pronominal element that is co-indexed with the subject of the same clause. Note that the term is used here in a

broader sense than in some syntactic studies, where it is sometimes confined to the pronoun co-indexed only with the relativized NP (Haegeman, 1991: 372). In some studies, particularly those of pidgins and creoles, the term subject referencing pronoun is also used (Keesing, 1988; Crowley, 1990: 230-252).

The loss of the subject verbal agreement in American Russian is clearly related to the destruction of conjugation paradigms, a process parallel to the loss of declension discussed above. However, loss of agreement is most prominent in the speech of the subjects with the lowest proficiencies, namely Ma, Na, A, and Sv (see Table 5 for the numerical data on loss of agreement). These speakers tend to use the masculine form in the past and the third person singular or the infinitive, as in (76), elsewhere. For example:

(75) a. American Russian

moi roditeli oni kupil drugoj dom (Sv, 75)

my parents they bought:MASC another house

b. Full Russian

moi roditeli kupili e•s•ce odin dom

my parents bought:PL more one house

'My parents bought another house.'

(76) American Russian

v universitet knig-i budet dorogo

in university:NOM book-NOM:PL will be:3SG expensively

'Books will be costly when you go to the university.' (=(28a))

See also examples (36a) and (60a) above.

As verbal agreement deteriorates, there arises a need for some other grammatical mechanism marking the relation between the subject and the predicate. This explains,

if only partially, another striking feature of American Russian, namely, the widespread occurrence of the subject resumptive pronoun before the verb. However, there must be some other reason for the rise of the resumptive pronoun because verbal agreement is lost only in the least competent speakers, while the resumptive pronoun is used by practically all the speakers surveyed.

Numerous examples of subject resumptive pronoun appeared above: (6a), (11a), (23a), (26a), (32a), (41a), (58a), (62a), (64b), (66a), (73a), (75a). Thus, in (75a), the subject moi roditeli is co-indexed with the resumptive pronoun oni 'they'. It is clear from the examples that American Russian is still at a stage where the resumptive pronoun distinguishes between the person, gender, and number of the subject. The resumptive pronoun is obligatory, even for more competent speakers, if the subject and the verb are separated by intervening lexical material, as in examples (64b) or (66a) above.

All these examples involve third person pronouns; the resumptive pronoun co-indexed with first and second person subjects occurs under the two principal conditions: if the subject is separated from the verb by intervening lexical material, as in (77), and if the subject is a compound noun phrase, as in (78).

(77) ty v•cera ty pozvonila moja mat´ dlja manikjur?
2SG yesterday RP: 2SG called:PERF my:NOM mother:NOM for manicure:NOM
'Did you call my mother for a manicure appointment yesterday?'

(78) Dima i ja my byli vmeste v •skole
Dima and I we were together at school
'Dima and I went to school together.'

Another possible explanation for the development of the resumptive pronoun is that the pronominal copy originates as a topic marker (a similar explanation was proposed for Tok Pisin in Sankoff, 1977). In spoken Full Russian, as well as in a number of other spoken languages, the use of the pronominal topic marker is quite common (Zemskaja, 1981: 150ff.), for example:

(79) Petja u vas# on •cto vsegda opazdyvaet?
Pete by you he what always is late
'This Pete of yours, is he always late like this?'

However, in spoken Full Russian, the resumptive pronoun signals a change of topic in discourse; therefore, it does not appear after any topic. In addition, the resumptive pronoun is clearly separated from the preceding segment by a pause, as indicated by example (79). In American Russian, the resumptive pronoun appears with any subject and/or topic, regardless of topic discontinuity. As for pausing between the resumptive pronoun and the preceding segment, it seems to be less consistent than in a full spoken language: there are numerous cases where no pause occurs at all; on the other hand, as was shown above, American Russian is characterized by aberrant pauses, which makes this criterion invalid.

While it is probably true that the resumptive pronoun originates following the tendency of the full spoken language, it is grammaticized in the reduced language and has a much wider function in it. That the original function of the resumptive pronoun relates to topic marking is confirmed by the fact that objects usually do not trigger resumptive pronouns. The correlation between subject and topic, on the one hand, and object and non-topic, on the other, is well-known (Li, 1976; Givon, 1983).[9]

The grammaticization of the resumptive pronoun under language attrition is probably due to the fact that clausal syntax in the reduced language is shallow and there is a need to signal the unambiguous syntactic relationship between the subject/topic and the predicate. In addition, because of this shallow grammar, there is less confidence on the part of the semi-speaker that the hearer will be able to consistently decode the message. To ensure adequate decoding, the semi-speaker increases the redundancy of the message; the regular introduction of a resumptive pronoun is part of this increasing redundancy.

3.2. Syntax of the sentence. In sentential syntax, two major tendencies differentiate American Russian from Full Russian. One of these tendencies is a direct continuation of the resumptive pronoun strategy described in the preceding section; it consists of the loss of the anaphoric null copy under clause linkage.

In full languages, there are three basic techniques of reference tracking under coreference: replacement of the coreferential entity by the null copy (80a), replacement of the coreferential entity by a pronominal copy (80b), and the repetition of the full NP (80c), usually when the two other strategies create ambiguity (Foley and Van Valin, 1984; Comrie, to appear). The following English examples illustrate these three strategies:

(80) a. The house$_i$ whirled around two or three times and Ø$_i$ rose slowly through the air (null copying)

b. Dorothy$_i$ felt as if she$_i$ were going up in a balloon (pronominal copying)

c. Jack$_i$ and Jill$_j$ went up the hill to fetch a pail of water; Jack$_i$ fell down and broke his$_i$ crown and Jill$_j$ went stumbling after (repetition of the full NP)

From the viewpoint of economy of expression, the null copy is certainly most efficient; from the viewpoint of processing, the most unambiguous strategy is the use of the full NP. However, such reasoning is valid only if context is ignored, because contextual factors play a crucial role in disambiguation. Once the context is introduced, coreferential reduction is preferred over the unambiguous repetition of NPs, and such preference recurs cross-linguistically. Thus, the following hierarchy of reference tracking strategies can be established, where the economy of expression is inversely related to the clarity of expression:

(81) Reference tracking strategies: Full language

null copy > PRO > full NP

In American Russian, the use of the null copy under coreferential reduction is practically non-existent. Thus, in examples (17) and (63a), repeated here, the pronominal copy in the second clause would be redundant from the viewpoint of a full language speaker:

(17) ona xo•cet byt´ model´, i ona budet tonk-aja dlja eto
she wants to be model:NOM and she will be thin-NOM:FEM for that
'She wants to be a model and she is trying to lose wait for that.'

(63) a. v Cleveland moja mama na•cala bolet´ i ona po•sla v hospital
in Cleveland my mom began to be sick and she went in hospital
'In Cleveland, my mother got sick and went to the hospital.'

Some other examples:

(82) onai togda ona uvidela moju mamu, i onai govorila s moej mamoj
she then RP saw my mom and she spoke with my mom
'Then she [a teacher] met with my mom and finally spoke to her.'

(83) my_j videli etot dom i my_j ne ljubim tam
we saw this house and we not like there
'We saw this house and didn't like it.'

Not only does the use of the pronominal anaphor increase in American Russian but also the repetition of a full NP under coreference. Thus, in (82), the NP moja mama is repeated in the second clause instead of being pronominalized. Another example where a full NP is repeated:

(84) i tam moj drugoj drugi i moj drugoj drugi on ne umel
and there my other friend and my other friend RP not could
drive a stick-shift
'My other friend was there; he didn't know how to drive a stick-shift car.'

The generalization is then that American Russian eliminates the null copy strategy and replaces a three-way distinction of reference tracking strategies found in a full language (82) by a two-way distinction shown in (85):

(85) Reference tracking strategies: Reduced language
PRO > full NP

The elimination of the null copy is certainly related to the development of a resumptive pronoun at the level of clausal syntax (see section 3.1 above). However, the resumptive pronoun is co-indexed with the subject (and/or topic), while the null

copy is successfully eliminated for other grammatical relations as well, as in (81). Again, it seems that the elimination of the null copy is due to the general increase in the redundancy rules observed in American Russian: the speaker, who is lacking confidence that the message would be decoded properly, introduces more "instructional" elements that are supposed to guide the hearer in the processing.

Given the reduction of the hierarchy to just two elements, PRO and full NP, another interesting question arises here: what are the correspondences between (81) and (85)? In other words, is it possible to establish a set of rules that would match the use of each of the three strategies in Full Russian to the use of a certain strategy in American Russian? One might surmise that coreferential null copying in a full language would correspond to coreferential pronominalization in a reduced language, and coreferential pronominalization and the repetition of a full NP in a full language would correspond to the repetition of a full NP in a reduced language. This supposition is easily refuted, as there is clearly no one-to-one correspondence between the use of the pronominal copy in Full Russian and the use of a full NP in American Russian. Compare (86a), which uses the full NP strategy, and its Full Russian equivalent (86b), which uses the null copy in the second clause:

(86) a. American Russian

Tanjai ne budet ona govorit´ potomu •cto Tanjai ne pomnit russkij

Tanya not will RP speak because Tanja not remembers Russian

‘Tanja won’t talk to you because she doesn’t remember Russian.’

b. Full Russian

Tanjai ne budet govorit´ potomu •cto Øi ne pomnit russkij

Tanya not will speak because not remembers Russian

‘Tanya won’t talk to you because she doesn’t remember Russian.’

An opposite type of example is shown in (87a); as (87b) indicates, Full Russian requires that a full NP be repeated in the second clause but the speaker uses a pronominal copy only:

(87) a. American Russian

moi roditeli oni priglasili alanai sestraj to•ze potomu •cto
my parents they:RP invited Alla's:NOM sister:NOM too because
onai/*j o•cen´ poprosila
she very asked:PERF

b. Full Russian

moi roditeli priglasili tak•ze allinui sestruj potomu •cto Allai
my parents invited also Alla's:ACC sister:ACC because Alla
ix o•cen´ prosila
them very asked:IMPF
'My parents also invited Alla's sister because Alla begged them to.'

The data collected for this study are not sufficient for the formulation of precise rules that determine the distribution of the pronominal copy and of the full NP under coreference. There seems to be a certain degree of variation between the use of the two strategies but variation of this kind can also be found in Full Russian; compare again (87a, b). Thus, the only solid conclusion at this stage is that American Russian differs from Full Russian, and from Emigr Russian for that matter, in the absence of the null copy under coreferential reduction.

The other feature that differentiates sentential syntax of American Russian from Full Russian syntax is the absence of gapping. Gapping, or deletion of the predicate under co-predication or clause linkage, is functionally similar to the use of the null

copy for a coreferential entity. Like null copying, gapping is motivated by economy of expression.

Spoken Full Russian uses gapping very commonly (Pesetsky, 1982: 642-660; Zemskaja, 1981: 214ff.). For example:

(88) [my [$_{VP}$[$_{V1}$poedem] na plja•z]], a [ty [$_{VP}$[$_{V2}$poede•s´] na rabotu] =>

we will go on beach and you will go on work

=> [my [$_{VP}$[$_{V1}$poedem] na plja•z], a [ty [$_{VP}$[$_{V2}$e] na rabotu]

'We will go to the beach, and you, to the office.'

In American Russian, gapping was not attested; no gapping occurs in the following naturally elicited examples:

(89) moja sestra ona u•cit business, i ja u•cu pre-med

my sister she:RP studies business and I study pre-med

'My sister studies business and I study pre-med.'

(90) moja babu•ska i dedu•ska poexal v Israel,

my:FEM grandmother and grandfather went:MASC in Israel

vse my poexal sjuda

all we went:MASC here

'My grandparents went to Israel and we all went to this country.'

The next example involves code-switching on the predicate; despite the fact that the predicates are in English, the speaker fails to delete the predicate on the second occurrence:

(91) moja mama goes mad esli ja stay over s Sharon, moj otec on
my mom goes mad if I stay over with Sharon my father he:RP
goes mad esli moi druzja u menja doma
goes mad if my friends by me at home
'My mother goes mad if I stay over at Sharon's house and my father, if my friends stay over at my house.'

Again, it seems that the loss of gapping can be explained by increasing redundancy of expression which is supposed to facilitate processing.

4. Discourse phenomena. Elicitation of narrative texts in American Russian is extremely difficult, given the lack of the vocabulary, frequent pausing, and the tendency to switch codes. All these difficulties notwithstanding, the elicited segments that are larger than a sentence reflect the same tendencies that were just described for sentential syntax; namely, the absence of gapping and null copying is also observed for segments larger than a sentence. Another interesting tendency that characterizes the structure of American Russian texts is the recapitulation of the the final clause of the preceding sentence before introducing new information. This type of repetition is known as the tail-head linkage (Grimes, 1975: 316; Reesink, 1990: 301). For example (tail-head segments are capitalized):

(92) tot mal´ciki togda UBE•ZAL # ON_I UBE•ZAL, i vot tot policemanj
this boy then ran away he ran away and DM this policeman
ON_J U MAL'•$CIKA_I$ DOMA # ON_J U $NEGO_I$ DOMA, i tam U $NEGO_I$ DOMA
he:RP by boy:GEN home he by him home and there by him home
policemanj onj stal kak egoi te foster parentsk#vot/ tam foster parentsk
policeman he:RP became as his those foster parents DM there foster parents

bol´•se NET # IX_k NET, ONI_k MERTVYE # ONI_k UMERLI/ potomu •cto

more is not them is not they dead they died because

$policeman_j$ onj ubil tix foster $parents_k$

policeman he:RP killed these foster parents

'The boy then ran away and the policeman went to his house. At his house, he assumed the image of the boy's foster parents. The foster parents were dead because the policeman killed them.'

The tail-head linkage, illustrated by (92), seems to be another manifestation of the redundancy mechanisms which were discussed earlier in relation to the clausal and sentential syntax.

Another feature of American Russian that becomes more apparent in texts than in isolated sentences is the frequency of demonstrative pronouns modifying nominals. Thus, in (92), we find tot policeman 'this policeman'; ti/te foster parents 'these/those foster parents'. Such use of demonstratives, which would be excessive in Full Russian, has a twofold explanation. First, it may be a result of the tendency to avoid ambiguity: demonstratives provide clearer referential instruction, and, therefore, assist the hearer in reference tracking and easier processing of the segment. Second, demonstratives in American Russian may compensate for the absence of the definite article; thus, the frequency of demonstratives would be directly related to the interference of English. (Whether the latter is a valid explanation can be tested by comparing the use of demonstratives in the speech of those whose primary and secondary language do not differ in the article system and also by studying the use of demonstratives in the speech of English learners of Russian as a second language.)

As for the redundancy mechanism, some parallels of this phenomenon are observed in the use of lexical items. In particular, there is a tendency towards repetition of certain adverbs, for example:

(93) ploxo ploxo on vedet
badly badly he behaves
'He behaves very badly.'

(94) molokanskie pesni to o•cen´ o•cen´ prekrasno
Molokan songs this very very splendid
'Molokan songs are absolutely splendid.'

This redundancy at the level of lexical items is probably motivated by several related factors, namely, semantic vagueness of each individual word, which calls for "extra support" coming from additional lexical items, and the need to express each notion most explicitly, to facilitate processing on the part of the hearer.

III. Correlation between lexical and structural attrition

Above, the evaluation of the speakers' proficiency was based on purely lexical data. It does not necessarily follow that lexical change should be connected to structural change; in theory, the two may be unrelated. However, several grammatical changes discussed above were more apparent in the speech of those subjects whose proficiency was lower. The goal of this section is to verify that the loss of grammar and the loss of vocabulary are related.

To verify this possible correlation, eleven structural variables were chosen, summarized in Table 4.[10] The percentage of occurrences consistent with the grammar of Full Russian was calculated within each variable for each of the eighteen speakers. These percentages were taken as the measure of grammatical competence. For each individual speaker, these percentages were then compared with the speaker's proficiency score.

[Table 4 here]

Where possible, fifty tokens of each variable were transcribed for each speaker.The variables for which fifty tokens were available are represented in Table 5. In the two left columns of the table, abbreviated names of speakers and their proficiency ranges are given, taken from Table 3; the speakers are listed in order of descending proficiency. In the following columns, which represent variables, the occurrence of the Full Russian feature is given, in percentage points, for each speaker within each of the four variables. Thus, 20 per cent indicated for speaker Le in the column "absence of resumptive pronoun" means that she avoided a resumptive pronoun, consistent with the grammar of Full Russian, in 10 sentences out of 50 (conversely, she used a resumptive pronoun, in accordance with the grammar of American Russian, in the other 40 sentences).

As the results in Table 5 indicate, high percentages of Full Russian grammatical features (prepositionally governed obliques, correct choice of aspect, subject-verb agreement, and the absence of a resumptive pronoun) are directly related to higher proficiency scores. In other words, speakers with higher proficiency show less deviation from the structural features of Full Russian, and low proficiency speakers demonstrate greater structural deviation from Full Russian. This correlation is not bound to one variable but reiterates across the four variables in Table 5.

Table 6 lists those variables for which the number of tokens obtained from an individual speaker was less than 50; in such cases, the available number of tokens (for each speaker) was transcribed. For example: speaker Sv produced 26 tokens where conditional had to be used. Of these 26 cases, Sv failed to use the conditional form with the particle by in 23 cases and used it in 3 cases. The speaker’s percentage of the correct use of conditional, i. e. the use conforming to Full Russian, was 12 per cent.

The results presented in Table 6 also confirm the correlation between the lexical and structural loss: speakers with higher proficiency have a higher percentage of Full Russian structural features than low proficiency speakers.

[Tables 5, 6 here]

The statistical results, therefore, confirm a positive correlation between the proficiency level, established on a lexical basis, and more general language competence as reflected by structural features. Of the structural variables introduced above, the most relevant ones seem to be syntactic variables, the loss of prepositional case forms, and the loss of dative. It is these variables that most clearly distinguish speakers with different proficiency levels.

The correlation between lexical and structural features, demonstrated by the data in Tables 5 and 6, points to two important conclusions.

First, since attrition in the lexicon and structural attrition are related, the basic vocabulary technique, proposed above as a method of rough approximation, is relevant for the general assessment of language competence. In other words, lexical proficiency can serve as a representation of structural knowledge and overall competence in a given language. Accordingly, the proficiency assessment method proposed above allows us to obtain a preliminary idea of the speaker's general status with regard to language competence. This seems to be a very important finding, which must certainly be tested against the material of other reduced languages. Some preliminary results obtained from semi-speakers of Polish, Kabardian, Tamil (Polinsky, 1993, 1994), seem to confirm the correlation between lexical and structural attrition.

The second conclusion is, in a way, related to the first one. Since lexical attrition corresponds to structural attrition, the lexical proficiency scores can serve as a basis

for the characterization and ranking of semi-speaker in terms of a continuum model. Such a model, which can be patterned on the synchronic creole continuum models (DeCamp, 1971; Bickerton, 1973; Rickford, 1987), will distinguish between acrolectal, mesolectal, and basilectal varieties of a reduced language. In the case of language attrition, acrolectal speakers are those whose language system is least removed from the respective full language. At the other extreme, basilectal speakers demonstrate greatest deviation from the full language. The intermediate varieties are then characterized as mesolectal.

Within these three groups of speakers, there is some variation in percentages obtained for individual speakers. Most conspicuously, individual speakers may have very high or very low percentages by some variables but score consistently within their group by the majority of other variables. Thus, speaker I differs from the rest of his group by an unusually high percentage of the predicative instrumental (at 21.4 per cent, see Table 6); otherwise, I's percentages agree with those of the rest of the group. Speaker P, whose scores are fairly low, stands out in the use of the correct possessive construction (at 22.2 per cent, Table 6). Assuming that the number of tokens is not too small to hinder the statistics, it can be suggested that the speakers within a lect may still differ. The relevant fact, however, is that differences between speakers within a lect are less significant than the differences across lects. This is particularly evident in the case of speakers with lowest proficiency, whose scores within each variable drop significantly compared to the rest of the pool.

If we correlate the data on the structural variables with the proficiency scores, American Russian speakers with proficiency scores 88+ can be identified as acrolectal speakers. Basilectal American Russian speakers are characterized by lowest proficiency scores, in this case 74-82. The mesolectal group includes speakers with proficiency scores between 82 and 88. One of the speakers, namely, G, whose proficiency score is 82, seems to occupy an intermediary position between the

basilectal speakers and mesolectal speakers. He resembles mesolectal speakers in his use of prepositionally governed obliques, use of aspectual forms, agreement, and use of the dative. Meanwhile, his use of the possessive construction and his low scores on the genitive of negation and null copying identify him with basilectal speakers.

The structural changes discussed above (and summarized in Table 4) are most prominent for basilectal speakers (speakers with higher attrition). Of course, the specific numerical scores might change if more informants are studied and people with scores lower than 70 are found (see above on the gap between scores of 30, which corresponded to total loss of Russian, and 74, the lowest score in this study).

Based on such a score breakdown, the individual idiolects studied here can be represented as elements of the attrition continuum, as shown in (95) (the speakers are listed in table 3 above).

(95) Attrition continuum: American Russian

basilectal speakers	mesolectal speakers	acrolectal speakers
70-82	82-88	88-90+
(Ma, Na, A, Sv)	(G, B, K, P, Z, L)	(Ko, S, Zh, E, I, Le, M, N)

Maintaining the continuum representation, it is possible to speak of these structural phenomena as tendencies that increase along the attrition continuum.

The attrition continuum model, as represented for American Russian, poses several further questions. First, as is evident from (95), acrolectal speakers are more numerous and basilectal speakers constitute a minority. For the specific case of American Russian, this can be explained by a variety of idiosyncratic factors: the speakers are sufficiently young, which helps them maintain better memories of their first language; though they have no access to the Full Russian speech community,

they are exposed to Emigr Russian, spoken by their families. On the whole, however, the question is whether the numerical ratio of basilectal, mesolectal, and acrolectal semi-speakers can be indicative of the degree of overall language loss or removal from the respective full language.

Other questions that arise with regard to the attrition continuum concern the relationship between the acrolect and the full language: what is the borderline between the acrolect and the full language? Can the proposed numerical procedure be employed in distinguishing between the full language and such an acrolect? What structural and lexical variables are necessary and sufficient to distinguish between the two?

Going back to the data in Table 5 and 6, it is clear that some structural features differ across lects in a more pronounced way than others. This greater variation may be interpreted in the following manner: these features are more indicative of language attrition than others, which vary less significantly. In light of this, the relevant question is whether it is necessary and possible to rank structural variables according to their diagnostic weight. It would be reasonable to develop a more general list of structural variables indicative of attrition such that structural variables determined by the internal grammar of an individual language would follow from it.[11] Judging by the data presented above, the variables that are most sensitive to the degree of language attrition include all the syntactic variables and those morphological variables that are the direct outcome of paradigm levelling.

IV. Language loss and pidginization

As was just mentioned, there are certain structural variables that may be more sensitive to the lectal variation and to the overall degree of language attrition. Interestingly, some such features observed in American Russian find direct parallels in extended pidgins and early creoles. Pidgins and creoles typically do not have case

paradigms, nor do they have developed verbal agreement; however, both of these features are also found in languages with a continuous tradition.

The situation with syntactic features is different; it seems that the heavy use of resumptive pronouns and the absence of null copying and gapping are quite unusual for languages with a continuous tradition; thus, one might establish unique syntactic similarities between American Russian and pidgins/creoles.

The goal of this section is to discuss syntactic similarities between American Russian and pidgins and creoles and to propose some tentative explanations for these.

1. Clausal syntax: resumptive pronouns. The issue of resumptive pronouns in pidgins and creoles has been discussed in great detail, primarily with regard to the Neo-Melanesian i, which in the literature is called either the predicate marker (M hlh usler, 1985: 373-375; 1987, 1990) or the subject referencing pronoun (Keesing, 1988). For example, in Bislama (Crowley, 1990: 240):

(96) maki hem i go long maket
Maki 3SG RP go to market
'As for Maki, he went to the market.'

A very good summary of the Neo-Melanesian i development is given by T. Crowley (1990: 231-260). Crowley and, earlier, M hlh usler (1987; 1990), have demonstrated that there have been changes in the status of i as it evolved in the early pidgins, stabilized in extended pidgins, and is possibly undergoing attrition in modern Tok Pisin. Based on their data, the following line of development may be suggested:

stage 1: early (restricted) pidgin: the null was much more frequent than *i*; the occurrences of i were sporadic and were probably determined by its function as the marker of topic change (Sankoff, 1977);

stage 2: extended pidgin > semi-creole: i was used as a resumptive pronoun

stage 2a (unclear): grammaticized i used as an agreement marker

stage 3 (currently in Tok Pisin): post-creole, undergoing a gradual loss of i which is again less frequent than the null pronoun (i < Ø*);* as noted in a number of recent Tok Pisin studies, this tendency is particularly strong in nativized Tok Pisin (M hlh usler, 1985: 375).

What is relevant for this study is that i functioned as a resumptive pronoun at the stage when Tok Pisin functioned as extended pidgin. The ongoing creolization of Tok Pisin seems to bring about a decline in the use of i.

The distribution of i in Neo-Melanesian and the distribution of resumptive pronouns in American Russian have both similarities and differences. First of all, American Russian, unlike Neo-Melanesian, did not develop a single resumptive pronoun for all persons: as the examples above indicate, all personal pronouns can be used in the resumptive function, and the choice of the pronoun is determined by the person and number of the subject. Apparently, Neo-Melanesian went through a similar stage when there was more than one resumptive pronoun; thus, for Bislama, mi, yu, i and oli (Crowley, 1990: 231-233, 237).

Next, American Russian and Neo-Melanesian differ in that American Russian permits resumptive pronouns co-indexed with a non-subject if the non-subject nominal undergoes strong topicalization. For example:

(97) to plat´e ja stirala ego s xolodn-aja vod-a
this dress I washed it:RP with cold-NOM water-NOM
'I washed this dress with cold water.'

Similarities in the distribution of the American Russian resumptive pronoun and the resumptive pronoun in Neo-Melanesian include:

use of the resumptive pronoun with both verbal and non-verbal predicates;

regular use of the resumptive pronoun co-indexed with the compound subject (in example (78) above, where the subject is Dima i ja ‘Dima and I’);

use of the resumptive pronoun when the subject is separated from the predicate by intervening lexical material;

use of the resumptive pronoun when the subject undergoes strong topicalization;

more consistent use of the resumptive pronoun in the non-first clause under clause linkage (see also below on parallels between American Russian and pidgins in sentential syntax).

American Russian differs from Tok Pisin in that it does not have resumptive pronouns in imperatives (see M hlh usler, 1985: 374, on the retention of i in Tok Pisin imperatives) and seldom has resumptive pronouns after modals. The latter difference is based on the assumption that Tok Pisin modal structures, such as (98), are monoclausal; thus, (98) would be comparable to a monoclausal modal structure in American Russian, as in (67a), repeated in (99) here:[12]

(98) em i mas i go
3SG RP must RP go
‘He must go.’ (M hlh usler, 1985: 374)

(99) mne nado gotovit’ dlja finals
me:DAT necessary prepare for finals
‘I have to get ready for finals.’

Regular resumptive pronouns are also used in Hiri Motu, where they are still differentiated by number. Compare (100a), with the subject in the plural, and (100b), where the subject is in the singular:

(100) a. sisia idia diho

dog 3PL go down

'The dogs went down.' (Dutton & Voorhoeve, 1974: 15)

b. kekeni ia tai

girl 3SG cry

'The girl cried.' (Dutton & Voorhoeve, 1974: 27)

The distribution of Hiri Motu subject pronouns is similar to that in Tok Pisin (Dutton & Voorhoeve, 1974; see also Dutton, 1976: 52-4, on structural similarities between Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu). Though Hiri Motu seems to be losing ground to Tok Pisin, it functioned as an extended pidgin earlier, probably in the 1940-1960s (Holm, 1989: 585), and its descriptions reflect this stage (Wurm & Harris, 1963; Dutton & Voorhoeve, 1974).

Several explanations have been proposed with respect to the origins of the resumptive pronoun in Neo-Melanesian. One of the popular explanations is that the pronoun was initially conditioned by pragmatic (discourse) factors and then grammaticized as a predicate marker (Sankoff, 1977). This seems to be consistent with the fact that resumptive pronouns are obligatory under the dislocation or topicalization of the subject and under the focusing of other clause constituents (see, for example, Crowley, 1990: 240, on preposed focused components that require a resumptive pronoun). More generally, the rise in the use of the resumptive pronoun can be explained, as was suggested earlier, by the general increase in the redundancy of expression, which results from speakers' incomplete competence.

Interestingly, resumptive pronouns take some time to develop. There are no resumptive pronouns in early, restricted, pidgins; above, references were given for the early stages of Neo-Melanesian. Another example of a highly restricted pidgin is Japanese Pidgin English in Hawaii, described in (Nagara, 1972). This pidgin does not have any resumptive pronouns and is generally characterized by a strong tendency to omit both nominal and pronominal constituents (Nagara, 1972: 182-183). Similarly, there are no resumptive pronouns in Russenorsk, which is also a restricted pidgin (Broch & Jahr, 1981, 1984).

2. Sentential syntax. In sentential syntax, American Russian resembles extended pidgins and early creoles in the avoidance of the null copy under coreference and absence of gapping.

The absence of the null copy under coreference attested in American Russian, is also found in a number of extended pidgins and some creoles. This tendency was already mentioned in the preceding section in relation to Neo-Melanesian pidgins, where the resumptive pronoun rule is observed much more strictly in non-first clauses under clause linkage. For example, in Tok Pisin:

(102) man i kam na em i sindaun
man RP come and 3SG RP sit down
'The man came and sat down.' (M lh usler, 1985: 399)

Similarly in Pitcairnese (103) and Jamaican Creole (104):

(103) a.ha: pə?a:le ʌn# ɛs kjutʌn, ɛs wa.wʌn, ɛs wohuwohu
that small one RP:3SG shy RP:3SG well-dressed RP:3SG conceited
'That undersized one? She is shy, well dressed, all dolled up.' (Ross & Moverley, 1964: 124)

b. hem græmma bin ge? wʌn opili... ən dem bæŋ a tʌpa ... olə dei
those old women have got a pounder and they beat the tapa all day
'Those old women had a pounder and they beat the cloth all day.' (Ross & Moverley, 1964: 134)

c. ai filen siki/ ai tsu so/ ai fivʌ
I feel sick I too sore I fever
'I am feeling sick, I am very ill, I have a cold.' (Ross & Moverley, 1964: 121)

(104) im faaldong an im brok im fut
3SG fell and 3SG broke 3SG leg
'He fell and broke his leg.' (Bailey, 1966: 131)

The absence of the null copy recurs in pidgins and creoles based on languages other than English; thus, it is impossible to explain this feature by the influence of English. Thus:

(105) Hiri Motu
sisia idia diho - idia daekau tano dekenai, ma inai tauna diba
dog RP:3PL go down RP:3PL go up land POSTP and this man arrow
peva ia abia vadan ia lao dala dekena
bow RP:3SG take all right RP:3SG go road POSTP
'The dogs went down and up the land, and the man took his arrows and bow and also went his way along the track.' (Dutton & Voorhoeve, 1974: 15)

(106) Kristang

japang ja rinta nus sa kaza, eli fala nus ta gadia ropianu

Japanese TNS enter 1PL POSS house 3SG say 1PL T keep European

na rentu kaza, eli ngge konfia, eli ke chuchu ku beinat ku yo

in inside house 3SG NEG:want believe 3SG want stab PREP bayonet PREP 1SG

'The Japanese entered the house and said that we were hiding a European; he did not believe us [that there were no Europeans in the house] and wanted to stab me with a bayonet.' (Baxter, 1983: 149)

Other examples of preference of the pronominal anaphora over the null copy are found in Guadeloupan creole (Raleigh, 1981: 92-93); Nigerian Pidgin English (Barbag-Stoll, 1983: 95); Cameroonian Pidgin English (Schneider, 1967: 114, 117, 118, 123, 137); Kenya Pidgin Swahili (Heine, 1973: 203-205).

Again, there seems to be an interesting parallel between the reduced language, which American Russian clearly is, and extended pidgins/early creoles: they all use resumptive pronouns and avoid null copying under coreference across clause. The tentative explanation for the avoidance of the null copy, again, resides in incomplete confidence in the grammar and the need to avoid potential ambiguity. As a result, redundancy mechanisms are established; the preference for more explicit coding is one such mechanism.

There seems to be at least one non-creole language the description of which mentions preference for avoiding null copying under coreference. This language is traditional Dyirbal, as described in (Dixon, 1972: 71-73, 130, 133-134, 154). According to Dixon, though coreferential reduction is allowed, it is not the preferable strategy under clause linkage. Compare the following Dyirbal example, where a full

NP is repeated under coreference, and the English translation, where the null copy is used:

(107) bayi yarai baniNu bayi yarai bagu djugumbilgu balgalŋanu
the man came the man the woman hit
'The man came here and Ø hit the woman.' (Dixon, 1972: 130)

Traditional Dyirbal, just like pidgins, often retains a pronominal head in the imperatives (Dixon, 1972: 111). If the absence of the null copy under coreference is indicative of language attrition, the situation in Dyirbal as described by Dixon can be characterized as incipient attrition: the avoidance of the null copy is still optional rather than a regularity of the language.

In a study of Dyirbal done almost two decades later and based on data collected from younger speakers, attrition is much more prominent (Schmidt, 1985). Schmidt herself indicates that the language is nearing extinction and that most speakers in her sample are actually semi-speakers. In Young People's Dyirbal, the tendency to avoid null copying becomes even more prominent, for example:

(108) ban mugiyam yanun jayil-gu ban banaganyu next year
she Name go jail-to she return
'Lillian went to jail, she will return next year.' (Schmidt, 1985: 239)

Pronominal copying is not limited to clause co-ordination; it also occurs under embedding:

(109) guyhgun banaga-nyu ban wawu-lay-gu
female ghost return-NON-FUT she fetch-ANTIPASSIVE-PURPOSE
guyi-gu
male ghost-DAT
'The female ghost returned in order to fetch the male ghost.' (Schmidt, 1985: 114)

Young People's Dyirbal has some occurrences of resumptive pronouns, as in the following example:

(110) ginyan one girl Phyllis ginyan ban-ban lilbit birabin gen
she-here she-here she-she a little bit scared also
'Phyllis here was a bit scared too.' (Schmidt, 1985: 149)

The absence of gapping in American Russian also finds parallels in pidgins and creoles: the avoidance of gapping by extended pidgins and creoles has been noted by a number of authors, starting with Robert Hall (1966). For example, in Jamaican creole:

(111) Jan gaan a maakit an Mieri *(gaan) a shap
John went to market and Mary went to shop
'John went to the market and Mary, to a store.' (Bailey, 1966: 131)

Again, the reasons for avoiding gapping are similar under language loss and under pidginization: the speaker lacks confidence in his or her own competence and tries to avoid ambiguity of expression.

3. Discourse phenomena. Tail-head linkage has been found in several regional varieties of Tok Pisin, for example:

(112) mi bihainim rot i go # mi go long rot na mi...
I follow path PROGRESSIVE I go on path and I
'I went on the road. I went on the road and I...' (Reesink, 1990: 301)

In the cited paper, Reesink explains Tok Pisin tail-head linkage by substrate influence (Reesink, 1990: 300-302). However, the fact that similar linkage is found in a reduced language like American Russian (compare example (92) above) may indicate that reasons other than substrate are involved here.

To summarize, the reduced language and extended pidgins/early creoles share a general syntactic tendency to reduce less language material than do full and non-creolized languages. This redundancy is consistently observed in the syntax of the clause, sentence, and discourse.

It is notable that American Russian corresponds to extended pidgins and early creoles, and not to developed creoles or post-creoles, on the one hand, or to restricted pidgins, on the other. This agrees with the numerical estimates of attrition, which indicate that American Russian has not reached the terminal stage. It would, therefore, be interesting to examine deeper attrition levels and to compare these with different stages of the pidgin-creole continuum.

If the correspondences between American Russian and pidgins are not accidental, they can have a bearing on the study of pidgins and creoles themselves; for instance, the development of resumptive pronouns and pronominal copying across clause can serve as a sign of pidgin extension. A subsequent replacement of these pronominal elements by the null copy, occurring against a more general background of language expansion may, in turn, be indicative of creolization and post-creolization. This

seems logical in view of the fact that the expansion of language functions allows speakers to produce more diverse and lengthier texts, and therefore, contributes to the emergence of grammar and syntax beyond the clause. Data from full languages with continuous traditions indicate that such syntax invariably includes sophisticated strategies of information compression; null copying and gapping are particular cases of such compression techniques.

Another corollary of the correspondences between a reduced language and an extended pidgin has to do with the relationship between universal tendencies and substrate influence in pidgins and creoles. For instance, tail-head linkage in Tok Pisin has been explained as a result of substrate influence. However, the occurrence of a similar phenomenon in a language which is not, by its origins, a pidgin, may indicate a more universal tendency of spoken language.

Of course, the correspondences established here are just preliminary. Whether or not they are typologically valid, can be verified by three basic research strategies: first, including more reduced languages, preferably with different degrees of attrition; second, introducing more structural parameters (in particular, embedding, Wh-Movement, relativization, word order); third, examining ordinary conversation and building corpora of continuum languages, rather than relying exclusively on native speaker intuitions (especially in highly literate societies).

Conclusion

This paper examined American Russian, a reduced variety of Russian, spoken by immigrants who learned Russian as their first language and then switched to English as their primary language. American Russian is characterized by profound structural changes, brought about by the fact that speakers no longer maintain Russian as their primary language. A stable correlation between the level of lexical attrition in the language and the level of structural (morphological and syntactic) loss is found. This

finding allows us to propose a compact method for assessing language attrition; the method, based on a simple lexico-statistical procedure, proves adequate as a more general linguistic tool of evaluating language competence.

In studies of language attrition, a distinction is made between externally and internally induced changes in the grammar (Seliger & Vago, 1991: 6-10). Externally induced changes are explained by the direct influence of the interfering language, while internally induced changes are motivated by universal principles or by the internal grammar of the language undergoing attrition.

Externally induced changes certainly play an important role in American Russian, but their primary domain is the lexicon; throughout this paper, we have shown that American Russian structural properties cannot be explained by the influence of English.

Similarly, structural changes observed in American Russian cannot be explained as a reflection of tendencies characteristic of Full Russian. Rather, these changes derive from restricted language competence, which leads to the levelling of paradigms, increased analyticism, and increased redundancy in morphology and syntax. Thus, if we maintain the contrast between externally and internally induced change, the latter change in American Russian is seemingly motivated by some universal principles.

The syntactic redundancy demonstrated for American Russian is paralleled by similar tendencies in extended pidgins and early creoles, which points to a more general correspondence between language loss and pidginization. It can be suggested that reduced language competence, whatever its its social circumstances are, results in redundancy rules as a way of restricting potential ambiguity of linguistic expressions.

The material of American Russian proves that a reduced language is indeed structurally different from the full language. Language attrition is indicated by a

series of structural features. If we ignore features internal to the grammar of Russian, the following structural properties are indicative of language attrition: loss of case distinctions; loss of verbal agreement; elimination of the conditional; loss or simplification of reflexivization rules; development of resumptive pronouns; loss of null copying under clause linkage; increased redundancy in discourse. Some parallels between reduced Russian and languages with the discontinuous tradition are already clear but it would be important to study other reduced languages in order to verify the properties tentatively listed here as diagnostic.

Notes

*Acknowledgements.

Throughout the paper, the following abbreviations are used:
ACC - Accusative; COND - Conditional; DAT - Dative; DIM - Diminutive; DM - Discourse marker; FEM - Feminine; FUT - Future; GEN - Genitive; IMPF - Imperfective; INC - Inceptive; INF - Infinitive; INSTR - Instrumental; MASC - Masculine; NOM - Nominative; PERF - perfective; POSTP - Postposition; PREP - Preposition; PRES - Present; PRP - Prepositional (case); PRT - Particle; REFL - Reflexive; RP - Resumptive pronoun.

1 As this explanation of terms shows, the major focus in the study of attrition is on the resulting situation rather than the process itself. The process of language decay or loss is also sometimes called attrition; another common term is obsolescence (Dorian, 1989).

2 Benson, who interviewed both ‘old’ and ‘new’ immigrants, mentions "marked differences in the extent of English linguistic penetration among the various speakers" (Benson, 1960: 163).

3 A large number of speakers were extremely reluctant to work with the investigator and objected even to the use of their first names; thus, here and elsewhere, speakers are referred to by their first name initial.

4 The choice of the verb ‘eat’ makes this example less acceptable, but for normative, not grammatical reasons: ku•sat’ is characteristic of baby talk and of the southern variant of Russian; the standard Russian word is est’.

5 In lines 1 and 3, the verb ku•sat’ ‘eat’ is characteristic of children’s speech and also of the southern variant of Full Russian; the verb est’ is standard. In line 15, the grammatical sequence is vy pravy, where the verb agrees with the pronoun in number (for a detailed discussion of the semantic and formal properties of Russian agreement, see Corbett, 1983: 30-39). In line 25, all the forms are acceptable, but the instrumental form is a little outdated (see also Comrie et al., 1995: 91 for a discussion of these forms).

6 There are other reasons for pausing, as well: speakers of American Russian lack linguistic confidence and probably assume that other speakers are like them. To ensure better understanding, they try to maintain a slower tempo of speech. This is confirmed by the fact that pauses occur even in numerical expressions, between the preposition and the numeral, as in (i). Given that numerals are retained well, it is extremely unlikely that the speaker pauses to recall the numeral.

(i) American Russian

i my poexat’ v# tri ma•siny

and we to go in three:NOM cars:NOM

‘And we will go in three cars.’

(ii) Full Russian

i my poedem na trex masinax

and we will go on three:PRP cars:PRP

‘And we will go in three cars.’

7 Here, the genitive plural is undistinguishable from the accusative plural but the American Russian speaker uses the nominative, unacceptable in Full Russian.

8 In Full Russian, the preposition iz governs the genitive case

9 This correlation may explain why resumptive pronouns are typically co-indexed with subject NPs; their co-indexation with non-subjects is confined to those cases where the non-subject is a topic (Polinsky, 1995).

10 Some of the structural variables discussed above were left out, for instance, tail-head linkage. The reason is that such a phenomenon is more difficult to compare with the respective structures of Full Russian; under certain stylistic conditions, for example in a folksy narrative, Full Russian would also allow tail-head linkage effects. Some subtler distinctions, for example, the contrast between the genitive and the accusative in the declarative (e.g., after such verbs as bojat'sja 'to be afraid'), were left out as well, because Full Russian speakers, too, show variation in the use of these forms. The absence of gapping was not included in the list of variables because of its general low frequency.

11 It seems that those variables whose diagnostic value is less significant also show more variation in the full language; with regard to Russian, one such variable is the use of the lexically governed genitive and genitive of negation, which is diminishing in Full Russian as well.

12 American Russian often expresses modal meanings by biclausal structures, with the modal matrix verb, as in (i). In such structures, the embedded verb has a pronoun, which can be explained by the reference tracking strategies of American Russian (see (85) above).

(i) ja xocu •cto ja •zit' s roommate, no tol'ko bez moi roditeli
I want that I live with roommate but only without my parents
'I'd rather live with a roommate but without my parents.'

It is possible that monoclausal modals in Tok Pisin developed from biclausal structures as well; however, a synchronic comparison of (98) and (i) would be unjustified.

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Table 1. American Russian and Full Russian: Basic vocabulary list
(American Russian translation variants are listed in decreasing frequency; ~ - epicene ending in adjectives)*

concept	**American Russian**	**Full Russian**
I	ja	ja
you	ty	ty
we	my	my
this	to	tot
that	to	tot
who	kto/•cto	kto
what	•cto/kak	•cto
not	ne/net	ne
all	vse/vs	vse
many	mnogo	mnogo
one	odin	odin
two	dva	dva
big	bol´•soe/bol´•soj	bol´•soj
long	dlinn~ /dlinnyj	dlinnyj
small	malen´k~/ malen´kij	malen´kij
woman	•zen•s•cina/tetja	•zen•s•cina
man	mu•z•cina/•celovek/djadja	mu•z•cina
person	•celovek	•celovek
fish	ryba	ryba
bird	ptica	ptica
dog	sobaka	sobaka
louse	-- /v•sa, v•si/muxa	vo•s´
tree	derevo	derevo
seed	-- /zerno/z rny•sko/seme•cka	semja
leaf	list/listik	list
root	koren´/--	koren´
bark (of a tree)	--/kora/ko•za	kora

skin	ko•za	koza
flesh	telo/mjaso	plot´
concept	American Russian	Full Russian
blood	krov´	krov´
bone	kost´	kost´
grease	•zir/maslo	•zir
egg	jajco	jajco
horn	truba/roga /--	rog
tail	xvost/szadi/zad	xvost
feather	pero/per´je	pero
hair	volosy/volos	volosy
head	golova	golova
ear	u•si	uxo
eye	glaza	glaz
nose	nos	nos
mouth	rot	rot
tooth	zub/zuby	zub
tongue	jazyk/--	jazyk
claw	-- / nogot´/kogti	kogot´
foot	noga	noga
knee	kolenka	koleno
hand	ruka	ruka
belly	•zivot/•zeludok	•zivot
neck	•seja	•seja
breasts	grud´/ sisja/--	grud´
heart	serdce	serdce
liver	- /po•cka/pe•cenka/serdce/bok	pe•cen´
drink	pit´	pit´
eat	ku•sat´/est´	est´
bite	-- /ukusit´	kusat´
see	videt´	videt´
hear	sly•sat´/slu•sat´	sly•sat´

know	znat´/uznat´	znat´
sleep	spat´	spat´
die	umeret´	umirat´
concept	American Russian	Full Russian
kill	ubit´	ubivat´
swim	plyt´/plavat´/kupat´sja	plavat´
fly	letet´/letat´	letat´
walk	idti/xodit´/guljat´	xodit´
come	idti/prixodit´	prixodit´
lie	le•c´	le•zat´
sit	sidet´	sidet´
stand	vstat´	vstavat´
give	dat´	davat´
say	skazat´	govorit´
sun	solnce	solnce
moon	luna	luna
star	zvezda/zvezdy	zvezda
water	voda	voda
rain	dozd´	dozd´
stone	kamni/kamen´	kamen´
sand	pesok/---	pesok
earth	zemlja	zemlja
cloud	oblako/tuca	oblako
smoke	dym/oblako	dym
fire	ogon´	ogon´
ashes	--	zola/pepel
burn (vi)	ob•ze•c´/goret´/•zec´	•zec´
path	doroga	tropa
mountain	gora	gora
red	krasn~	krasnyj
green	zelen~	zel nyj
yellow	•zelt~	•zeltyj

white	bel~	belyj
black	•cern~	•cernyj
night	no•c´	no•c´
hot	gorja•co/gorja•c~	gorja•cij
concept	American Russian	Full Russian
cold	xolodno/xolodn~	xolodnyj
full	poln~/bol´•soe	polnyj
new	nov~	novyj
good	xoro•s~/xoro•so	xoro•sij
round	krugl~	kruglyj
dry	suxoe	suxoj
name	imja	imja

Note: *For verbs, American Russian citation forms are given only in the infinitive, to minimize the number of variants in the table. Other citation forms included third person singular, first person singular, and imperative.

Table 2. American Russian: Stable and unstable concepts in the basic vocabulary list

HIGHEST STABILITY		INTERMEDIARY STABILITY		LOWEST STABILITY
big	name	all	path	ashes
bird	neck	belly	root	bite
black	new	cloud	sand	breast
blood	night	cold	say	burn
bone	nose	come	smoke	claw
die	one	ear	stand	flesh
dog	person	eat	star	horn
drink	rain	eye	stone	liver
earth	red	feather	swim	louse
egg	say	fly	tongue	man
fire	see	full	tooth	seed
fish	sit	good	walk	tail
foot	skin	grease	who	
give	small	hair	woman	
green	sun	hear		
hand	that	hot		
head	this	leaf		
heart	tree	not		
I	water			
kill	we			
knee	what			
know	white			
lie	yellow			
long	you			
many				
moon				
mountain				
mouth				

Table 3. American Russian speakers

(m - male; f - female; & - grew up with a sibling)

speaker	**age emigrated**	**origins in Russia**	**years in the US**	**attrition index**
B(m)	7	Moscow	11	86.5
G(m)&	6	Leningrad	16	82
K(m)	9	Moscow	17	88.5
Ko (m)	10	Tashkent	10	90
Ma (m)&	7	Moscow	17	74
Na (m)&	7	Odessa	8	77
P(m)	8	Moscow	9	86
S (m)	9	Kiev	12	88.5
Z(m)&	11	Minsk	12	84
Zh (m)	9	Moscow	18	89.5
A(f)&	5	Kiev	12	77
E(f)	7	Leningrad	14	89
I(f)	7	Leningrad	11	88.5
L(f)&*	14	Moscow	13	84.5
Le(f)&*	7	Moscow	13	90.5
M(f)	9	Kharkov	12	88.5
N(f)	12	Kiev	3	90
Sv (f)	5	Odessa	12	75

Note: L and Le are sisters

Table 4. Structural variables differentiating Full Russian and American Russian

variable	**Full Russian**	**American Russian**
case of the predicative nominal	INSTR(NOM)	NOM
case governed by prepositions	other than NOM	NOM
possessive construction	u-phrase + BE	HAVE clause
case of the nominal in existential negative clause (net)	GEN	NOM
case encoding the recipient/addressee	DAT	ACC
reflexive verbs	with -sja	without -sja
conditional	yes	no
use of the correct aspectual form	yes	no
subject-verb agreement	yes	no
resumptive pronoun	no	yes
null copy under coreference	yes	no