

The Canadianization of Slavic Surnames; A Study in Language Contact

Part II

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II. PHONOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENTS*

Most Slavic surname changes undergo a phonological change. Some of these changes are brought about automatically since the surname may violate phonetic patterns of the English language as it is spoken in Canada;⁴⁷ others are brought about merely by their very close affinity in sound to a non-Slavic surname.

1. Phonological Substitution

Without radically changing the structure of the surname, the substitution of single vowels and consonants may suffice to change the character of the Slavic surname:

Bednarz	Bednard
Bonk	Bond
Byskel	Byskal
Dach	Dash
Fiedura	Fuedora
Gawron	Gowron
Hordy	Hardy
Lanowy	Lanoway
Moluk	Maluk
Piskor	Paskor, a.m.o.

Simple phonological substitution may often be accompanied with an adjustment in orthography:

Bilski	Bilsley
Cruk	Klook (to avoid "Crook"?)

* This portion is the second part of "Part Two: A Linguistic Analysis of Slavic Surname Changes" published with Part One of the article in *Names* (June, 1963).

⁴⁷ The following, for example, are automatically adjusted: the rolled *r*, the guttural *kh*, and soft consonants.

Danych	Danish
Hajdasz	Hardash
Kilar	Keller (to avoid "Killer"?)
Mygrowycz	Marowitch
Pilips	Phillips
Senyck	Sennett
Stolwyck	Stalwick
Sutoff	Sutton.

2. Mispronunciation as a Basis for Change

Very often the basis for phonetic substitution is the mispronunciation of the Slavic surname, caused by an ambiguous transliteration of the surname. The combination *ch*, used to transliterate the hard guttural in the Scottish word "loch," is liable to be pronounced as a sibilant, "church"; for example, *Strycharz* – *Strychard*.

The letter *c*, transliterating the sound *ts*, as in "tsar," and "tse-tse fly," will often suggest (1) the guttural *k*, especially in the combination of *-ck-* (for example, *Hucko* (pron. Hootsko) – *Hacko*); (2) the sound *s*, as in *Boycun* – *Boyson*.

The letter *i*, representing the sound *ee*, as in "meet," takes on the sound of the letter *i* in the word "is" (for example, *Pitz* – *Pitts*). In final position, however, especially in the suffixes *-ski*, *-cki*, the *ee*-sound is retained.

The letter *u*, transliterating the sound of *oo*, as in the word "loot," will inevitably suggest the sound of the letter *u* in the word "but": *Boycun* – *Boyson*.

3. Shift in Stress

The problem of stress in the surname is also connected with phonological change. The tendency in English to place the stress on the first syllable of the surname is often adapted to Slavic surnames. This shift in stress in turn causes the mutation of the vowel originally stressed in the Slavic surname, especially in rapid speech:

The Slavic Surname	The Stress	The New Surname
With Stress	Shifted	With Stress
Italicized		Italicized
Baran	Baran	Baron
Belous	Belous	Bellows

Boycun	Boycun	Boyson
Caruk	Caruk	Carrick
Cohan	Cohan	Cowan
Kofluk	Kofluk	Kufflick
Kornut	Kornut	Cornett (?)
Moroz	Moroz	Morrows, Morris
Nykun	Nykun	Naken
Pawluk	Pawluk	Pollick, Pollock
Polak	Polak	Pollock
Rusnuk	Rusnuk	Rusnick, a. o.

4. Phonological Extension

Sounds may be added to the surname without creating a new syllable.⁴⁸ The change of *Ilkow* – *Hillcoff* shows initial phonological extension by the addition of the *h*, and final phonological extension by the addition of the *ff*, accompanied by a change in orthography. The change of *Benchick* – *Bensics* shows (1) final phonological extension by the addition of the *s*, (2) phonological substitution of the *ch* with *s*, and (3) a change in orthography, *ck* – *k*. Medial extension is exemplified by the addition of *l* in *Kucey* – *Coursley*. Other examples of this phenomenon are:

<i>Burak</i>	Borax (Boraks)
<i>Cotic</i>	Coltis
<i>Fedorchuk</i>	Frederick
<i>Hoose</i> (Hus)	Hughes (Hyuz)
<i>Jendyk</i>	Hendrick
<i>Moroz</i>	Morrows
<i>Pangracz</i>	Pendgrass
<i>Sherbuck</i>	Sherbrook, a. o.

5. The letter *e* as a Sound-Fixing Agent

The letter *e* can serve as a mere extension in orthography with no influence on pronunciation, as in the names *Corne*, *Burke*, *Borse*, *Toole*, *Antonie*; or, it may act as an agent fixing the sound of a preceding vowel, as in the following examples:

⁴⁸ The addition of a syllable, especially common suffixes such as *-er*, *-ers*, *-ton*, and others are discussed under "Hybridized Forms," *infra*, Part III.

Galsky	Gale
Le Bansky	Le Bane
Palahicki	Pale
Popowich	Pope
Smokoriwski	Smoke, a.m.o.

It may be noted that the author's "Dictionary" [already referred to] records only one example of an *e* being applied to the old Slavic surname, with the resulting form being accepted as the new surname: *Drach* – *Drache*. As shown above, the above phenomenon is usually applied to an abbreviated form.

6. Simplification of Diphthongs

In Slavic, the iotized vowels *ia*, *iu*, *io*, and *ie* soften the preceding consonant; but once the surname is transferred into the English language system, these forms lose this softening effect. Instead, the above forms are usually extended when pronounced in everyday speech: *ia* is pronounced "ee-ya," *iu* is pronounced "ee-yu," *io* becomes "ee-yoh," and *ie* becomes "ee-ye."

In changing his surname, the Slavic name changer will often remove the initial element *i*, thus leaving the full vowel:

<i>Andruniak</i>	<i>Andronak</i>
<i>Chiaryszyn</i>	<i>Charison</i>
<i>Ciura</i>	<i>Curry</i>
<i>Diakow</i>	<i>Jakul</i>
<i>Dziuba</i>	<i>Juba</i>
<i>Guschuliak</i>	<i>Gushulak</i>
<i>Karasiewicz</i>	<i>Karasevich</i>
<i>Kaziuk</i>	<i>Kazuk</i>
<i>Kindzierski</i>	<i>Kingersly</i>
<i>Kosteniuk</i>	<i>Kostnuk</i>
<i>Lyftiriuk</i>	<i>Leftrook</i>
<i>Mielnichuk</i>	<i>Mellen</i>
<i>Pasieczka</i>	<i>Pasetka</i>
<i>Pawliuk</i>	<i>Pawluk</i>
<i>Wasyleniuk</i>	<i>Wasylnuk</i>
<i>Zavadiuc</i>	<i>Zavaduk, a.o.</i>

Dorsal Palatalization. Before the softening *y*-element is dropped, in certain cases it causes palatalization of the preceding letter. This phenomenon, known as dorsal palatalization, is common in Polish and Western Ukrainian dialects, and it is the change in speech of *sya-*, *syu-*, *syo-*, and *sye-* to *sha-*, *shu-*, *sho-*, and *she-*, respectively. Similarly, *tsya-*, *tsyu-*, *tsyo-*, and *tsye-* change to *cha-*, *chu-*, *cho-*, and *che-*. When changing his name, the name changer will occasionally emphasize the above speech behavior:

<i>Cieckiewicz</i>	<i>Checkwood</i>
<i>Ciesla</i>	<i>Chester</i>
<i>Ciolka</i>	<i>Cholka</i>
<i>Ewusiak</i>	<i>Ushock</i>
<i>Jarosiewicz</i>	<i>Jarosh</i>
<i>Karakociuk</i>	<i>Karakochook</i>
<i>Walcsiak</i>	<i>Walsh</i>
<i>Wiwsianski</i>	<i>Wish</i>
<i>Yaciuk</i>	<i>Yaschuk.</i>

Connected with the above phenomenon, though not quite as apparent, are the following changes:

<i>Hacy</i> (Sl. <i>Hatsiy</i>)	<i>Huch</i>
<i>Stiasny</i>	<i>Chasney.</i>

Other Simplifications. It was mentioned above, that often the *i* or softening *y*-element is dropped, leaving the vowel.⁴⁹ The reverse process is also in evidence. Once again based on English pronunciation, the diphthong may lose the vowel, but retain the *i* (*y*), which usually takes on the sound of *i*, as in the word "is":

<i>Ciuch</i>	<i>Cinch</i>
<i>Guraliuk</i>	<i>Gorlick</i>
<i>Hasiuk</i>	<i>Hasick</i>
<i>Hreliak</i>	<i>Hryclik</i>
<i>Kaluzniak</i>	<i>Kaluznick</i>
<i>Korniak</i>	<i>Cornick</i>
<i>Kosciuk</i>	<i>Kostik</i>
<i>Nieckarz</i>	<i>Nichols</i>
<i>Osadryuk</i>	<i>Osadick</i>

⁴⁹ *Supra*, this page.

Prodaniuk	Perdonik
Rewniak	Ronyck
Riemniak	Ronyck
Synycia	Senicie
Wordyniuk	Verdenik
Zielke	Silkie.

On rare occasions, the transposition of letters helps to solve the problem:

Bialek	Bailey
Maciag	McCaig.

The falling diphthong *-ow-* is very often simplified to *-o-*:

Kominowski	Kominoski
Kornakowski	Koski
Kruzkowski	Koski
Pluzianowski	Pluzianoski
Sorokowski	Sarcosky
Szustakowski	Takoski
Zluchowski	Koski.

The falling diphthongs *-uy-* and *-ey-* can also be simplified to simply *u* and *e*, respectively:

Czujko	Chucko
Hujwan	Huen
Nasejchuk	Nasechuk
Pocaluwika	Pestaluky.

7. Simplification of Sibilants and Gutturals

The sibilant ts. The sibilant *ts*, often transliterated as *c*, is rarely retained in full, but often simplified into *s*, or, at times, it becomes *k*.

The spirantization or change of *ts* to *s* is shown in the following surname changes:

Capiak	Sapiak
Cinkalo	Sincola
Cirulnikov	Searle
Cybak	Cyback
Elnicki	Elniski

Komarnickyj	Komarniski
Marciniak	Marsyn
Nieckarz	Naskar
Pacyniak	Pacey
Stecij	Stacey
Topolnicki	Topolniski
<i>Tsihikalo</i>	<i>Sihikal, a.o.</i>

It may be noted here, that because the letter *c* in English can carry an *s*-sound (as in *celery, century, circle*), in certain of the above cases the change of *ts* to *s* perhaps may have been suggested through mispronunciation of the *c*.

The change of *ts* to *k*, may, in a similar manner, be influenced by mispronunciation of the letter *c*, which, although it transliterates the sound *ts*, is commonly equated with the sound of *c* in such words as *can, lac, rack, crack*. The suffix *-cki* is always subjected to this mispronunciation by the non-Slav in Canada, who pronounces it *-ki* rather than *-tski*. Accordingly, we find the following phonological changes which are, properly speaking, problems in transliteration rather than simplifications of the *ts*-sound:

Bicanic	Buchanan
Cieckiewicz	Checkwood
Ciotka	Code
Ciura	Curry
Hucko	Hacko
Nieckarz	Nichols
Synycia	Senicie.

Examples of phonological reversion are also available, whereby the *ts* becomes *st*:

Pocaluika (Sl. Potsaluyka)	Pestaluky
Prycun (Sl. Prytsun)	Preston

The sibilants shch and sh. The sibilant *shch*, although it is common to all the Slavic languages, is rarely preserved once it comes into contact with English. In attempting to adjust his surname to a new language system, the name changer will simplify the *shch* to *sch* or *sh*:

Gryszczuk	Gryschuk
Szczerbaniewicz	Sherb

<i>Szczombrocki</i>	<i>Shambrock</i>
<i>Szczurko</i>	<i>Schurko</i>
<i>Szczygol</i>	<i>Shygot.</i>
<i>Szczygol</i>	<i>Shygot.</i>

Occasionally the *shch* has already been simplified to *sch*, in which case it may be further simplified to *sh*:

<i>Guschuliak</i>	<i>Gushulak</i>
<i>Oneschuk</i>	<i>Onyshuk.</i>

The sibilant *sh* has a tendency to change to *s* if another sibilant or the sounds *k*, *m*, *n*, *l*, appear in the same surname:⁵⁰

<i>Czishek</i>	<i>Chisiek</i>
<i>Hrushka</i>	<i>Ruskin</i>
<i>Hyszka</i>	<i>Hescott</i>
<i>Luczyszyn</i>	<i>Luchisin</i>
<i>Shemko</i> (and <i>Shymko</i>)	<i>Simcoe</i>
<i>Shiskovsky</i>	<i>Sisko</i>
<i>Shkromeda</i>	<i>Skromeda</i>
<i>Shmigelsky</i>	<i>Smigelsky</i> (and <i>Smiley</i>)
<i>Szkwarek</i>	<i>Squires</i>
<i>Szlachtycz</i>	<i>Slater</i>
<i>Szynkarczyn</i>	<i>Simms</i>
<i>Szynkarczyn</i>	<i>Sincarsin</i>
<i>Tyszko</i>	<i>Tysko.</i>

The guttural kh. The guttural *kh*, pronounced as the “*ch*” in the Scottish word “loch,” or the German “lachen,” being completely foreign to the English language system, is either dropped or substituted by the name changer. In many cases the *kh*, when transliterated as *ch*, will succumb to mispronunciation and take on the sound of the sibilant *ch*, as in the word “church”:

<i>Charambura</i>	<i>Chelly</i>
<i>Chodynieski</i>	<i>Chody</i>

⁵⁰ For an interesting discussion on the unfavourable connotations associated with *shm*, *shn*, and *shl*, see A. A. Roback, *Destiny and Motivation in Language: Studies in Psycholinguistics and Glossodynamics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Sci-Art Publishers, 1954), pp. 137–152. Mr. Roback says, for example, that “the *l* . . . combined with the *s* or *sh* . . . emphasizes the wet palatal sliding of the tongue and this gives us the ‘feel’ of the *slimy*.” p. 148.

Michasiw	Mitchell
Rychlewski	Richlew
Strycharz	Strychard.

Often, the guttural *kh* is substituted by another guttural, *k*, especially in combination with *r*:

<i>Cheremkora</i>	<i>Chrome</i>
<i>Chrapun</i>	<i>Carpen</i>
<i>Czuchry</i>	<i>Chuckrey</i>
<i>Majchrowicz</i>	<i>MacRae</i>
<i>Michaluk</i>	<i>McLeod</i>
<i>Michosky</i>	<i>Mickoski</i>
<i>Mychalchuk</i>	<i>McKall</i>
<i>Wilchowecky</i>	<i>Elko</i>
<i>Zemleduch</i>	<i>Zemliduk.</i>

The cluster *-khn-* is without exception simplified, or completely dropped. This may be done by (1) removing the *kh* and retaining the *m* only: *Chmilewski* – *Millon*, *Chmilowski* – *Milne*, and *Milowski*; or, (2) by having the *kh*, usually transliterated as *ch*, take on the sound of the sibilant *ch*, and removing or setting off the *m*: *Chmelnitsky* – *Cham*, *Chelsky*, and *Chapman*.

Only rarely is the *kh* substituted by the less harsh-sounding *h*: *Cholefka* – *Holewka*, *Chomyn* – *Homan*.

8. Simplification of Consonant-Clusters⁵¹

The Slavic languages abound in groups of consonants which are foreign to the structure of the English language.⁵² In reconstructing or changing his surname, the name changer will attempt either to simplify the cluster or to remove it altogether. The following is a list of the consonant-groups which were found to have been revised or simplified most frequently. These are arranged in alphabetical order.

⁵¹ See also clusters discussed under Section Seven of this chapter, "Simplification of Sibilants and Gutturals," *supra*, pp. 187–190.

⁵² Consonant-groups which are avoided in English are discussed by Leonard Bloomfield in *Language* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1933), pp. 131, 370–73; and by Bernard F. Huppe and Jack Kaminsky in *Logic and Language* (New York: Alfred A Knoff, 1956), pp. 61–69.

Chk, chn. These combinations do not appear in initial position but are usually found in the Slavic languages as a part of one of the many diminutive suffixes. From the following examples, it will be noted that the initial *ch*-element is either removed or substituted, while the *k-* or *n-* element of the cluster remains:

Bryczka	Brickey
Luchka	Lucoe
Mirochnik	Morosnik
Pachkiwsky	Packowski
Pasieczka	Pasetka
Raczka	Roscoe.

Dz. In Slavic both the *d* and *z* in this cluster are usually pronounced, although in rapid speech this group is mutated to the sound of the letter *g* in the word "ginger." This consonant-group is never fully retained. Either one of the two elements, *d* or *z*, may be retained; or, the *dz* may be represented by the letters *g* or *j*.

Dzeckciar	Decker
Dzionek	Jonuk
Dziuba	Juba
Dzurman	Germaine
Kindzierski	Kingersly
Kolodziejczuk	Kolodi
Slobodzian	Bowden.

Hl, hn, hr. Two of these three clusters, *hr* and *hl*, are considered by Bloomfield⁵³ to be combinations completely foreign to the English language.⁵⁴ These clusters may be simplified in a variety of ways: (1) by retaining either one of the two elements and removing the other; (2) in the case of *hr*, by syllabification of the *r* (*Hrynshyn* – *Herneshen*); (3) by retaining both elements of the group, but separating both parts of the cluster by transposition of a vowel which stands after the cluster (*Hladij* – *Halliday*), or a vowel not at all connected to the cluster (*Hluchanuk* – *Hall*). Other examples are:

⁵³ Bloomfield, *Language*, p. 131.

⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that at least four surname changes listed in the "Dictionary" retain the *hr* cluster; for example, *Hranichuk* – *Hran*.

<i>Hlek</i>	<i>Hawk</i>
<i>Hnatuik</i>	<i>Naturk</i>
<i>Hnatuk</i>	<i>Knight</i>
<i>Hnituk</i>	<i>Hanty</i>
<i>Hnogoway</i>	<i>Honoway</i>
<i>Hnydyshyn</i>	<i>Henderson</i>
<i>Hrabluk</i>	<i>Harris</i>
<i>Hrankowski</i>	<i>Hanker</i>
<i>Hrushka</i>	<i>Ruskin</i>
<i>Hryniawski</i>	<i>Hearne</i>
<i>Uhryn</i>	<i>Erin, a.m.o.</i>

Tk. Unless completely removed, this cluster is simplified in a manner similar to the above. Occasionally, the *tk* becomes the English *th*, or the *t* may become voiced (*Ciotka* – *Code*):

<i>Czastkiewicz</i>	<i>Chester</i>
<i>Dutka</i>	<i>Duthie</i>
<i>Jentke</i>	<i>Jenkins</i>
<i>Litkowicz</i>	<i>Lithown</i>
<i>Matkowskyj</i>	<i>Matoski</i>
<i>Tkachuk</i>	<i>Taychuk, Thacher</i>
<i>Tkachyshen</i>	<i>Ketcheson</i>
<i>Zytkiewicz</i>	<i>Zeaton, a.o.</i>

Wr. This group is commonly found in combinations of a falling diphthong followed by *r*: *aw-r*, *ow-r*. Occasionally, especially when it occurs in initial position, the *wr* can suggest the sound of *r*, as in the word *wrong*, and a suitable change is made accordingly: *Wrobleski* – *Rowe*. Other simplifications are exemplified by the following:

<i>Gajowry</i>	<i>Gayaway</i>
<i>Hawryluk</i>	<i>Havelock</i>
<i>Wawryshyn</i>	<i>Warren</i>
<i>Wrobleski</i>	<i>Rowe.</i>

Other simplifications of consonant-clusters, not as common as the above, are as follows: *Ckwirk* – *Swarek* – *Warren*; *Gdalevitch* – *Daley*; *Jaknowitz*, *Yaknowets* – *Janower*; *Ksionzyk* – *Kunard*; *Wdowiak* – *Dovyak*.

9. The Slavic *v*⁵⁵

The *v* in Slavic is sometimes pronounced as a *w* or an *f*, depending on the language and its position in the surname. In the mind of the name changer there is a considerable amount of confusion as to its proper pronunciation. Nonetheless, in changing his name he is likely to substitute the *w* with a *v* or *f*, thus emphasizing a more definite alternation of vowels and consonants.⁵⁶

Halarwicz	Harvich
Ilkow	Hillcoff
Karasiewicz	Karasevich
Przednowak	Novak
Wdowiak	Dovyak, a.o.

10. Transposition⁵⁷

A phonological change may be suggested solely by the letters which form the Slavic surname. All that is required, sometimes, is a reversed order: *Puach* (Sl. Puhach) – *Pauch*. Although, from the point of view or orthography, the new name has retained all the letters found in the old, Slavic surname, from the point of view of phonology it has been contracted from two syllables to one. The particular influence of orthography on phonological phenomena is illustrated by the following two examples of surname changes, which show the new name consisting of all the original letters, but whose sequence has been altered:

Lucyk (Sl. Lutsyk)	Lucky
Samec (Sl. Samets')	Samce

It is probable that the letter *c*, as it appears in the original Slavic surnames *Lucyk* and *Samec*, has been misconstrued as *k* and *s*,

⁵⁵ See also, *Supra*, p. 27.

⁵⁶ The trend towards such an alternation in the English language is discussed in E. G. Newman's "The Pattern of Vowels and Consonants in various Languages," *American Journal of Psychology*, 1951, 64. 369–379.

⁵⁷ For transposition in Greek names see James E. Alatis' "The Americanization of Greek Names," *Names* 3.149–150; for transposition in Jewish names see Ernest Maass's "Integration and Name Changing among Jewish Refugees from Central Europe in the United States," *Names*, 1958, 6. 148.

respectively; and the resulting mispronunciation might have had some bearing on the formation of the new surname.⁵⁸

As intimated above, the transposition of a letter or combination of letters can result in that letter losing its original sound and producing a new sound, or fixing the sound of other letters and combinations of letters. For example, note the effect of the reversal of letters in the Slavic diphthong *ia*:

Bialek	Bailek
Kwiatkowski	Kwaite
Maciag (Sl. Matsyag)	McCaig
Swiatkowski	Swait.

On the other hand, a letter together with its sound may be transposed and even revised orthographically, without a noticeable change in the phonological value of the individual letter itself:

<i>Kobilnitsky</i>	Koblin
<i>Kobrinsky</i>	Corbin
<i>Koralianchuk</i>	Carroll
Minuk	Munick
<i>Mlynarowich</i>	Milne, a.o.

Folk-Etymology as a Basis for Change. The following changes, though they appear to be translations, have been treated solely from the orthographical, phonological and morphological points of view, rather than from the semantic point of view:

Adamchuk	Adams
Andrusyk	Andrews
Mychalyszyn	Michaels
Paulishyn	Paulson
Petruchiw	Peters
Pilipeczuk	Phillip
Stephan	Stevens, a.m.o.

In the majority of cases these surname changes are motivated by the fact that similar-sounding names already exist in the new language system and are highly acceptable; and also by the fact

⁵⁸ See section two of this chapter, "Mispronunciation as a Basis for Change," *Supra*, p. 30, also p. 36.

that the name changer feels less remorse for having "translated" his surname, which at the same time retains many of its old features.

Although the name changer may believe he has actually translated his surname, and although, strictly speaking, this may be true, it is improbable that his new surname is the result of a search for a suitable translation. Two facts seem to point this out. In the first instance, translated or partially translated surnames, which differ radically from the old Slavic surname in points of phonology, orthography and morphology, number less than twenty-five⁵⁹ (for example, *Kovacs* – *Smith*, *Popiel* – *Ash*, a.o.). Secondly, it is significant that none of the Slavic surnames beginning with the root *Iwan-*, *Ewan-* were translated to "Johnson" or "John"; but in the majority of cases, the root was retained: *Ewanson*, *Iwanson*, *Evan*, *Iwan*, a.o. Nor were any of the Slavic surnames beginning with *Wasył-* and *Wasil-* translated to some form of "Basil." Instead, the new surname was a completely different surname altogether, or it retained the initial letter or letters (*Walker*, *Weslak*, *Wesley*, a.o.). These facts, then, seem to indicate that surname changes are seldom considered from the semantic point of view.

For similar reasons, it is quite impractical to consider as partial translations the change of *Prokopyshyn* to *Jackson*, and of *Hasiuk* to *Evans*. Although it is true that *-shyn*, *-son*, *iuk* and *-s* are all patronymics expressing "son of," these morphemes are commonly considered as merely final extensions, and rarely does anyone attach to them any true semantic significance.*

⁵⁹ *Supra*, p. 52 galley sheet.

* To be concluded in the next issue.