

OLD BELIEVERS IN BRAZIL: PRESERVING LINGUISTIC IDENTITY¹

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Abstract. This article presents a study of the history of Russian Old Believers' emigration to Brazil. As such, it analyses the reasons that allowed them to maintain their linguistic identity, and identifies the features of the dialect of *of the Russian language of the Old Believers living in Latin America and in Brazil in particular*. Old Believers moved to Brazil after centuries of oppression, first leaving Central Russia for the East of the country, Siberia and Primorye, and then, after the 1917 Revolution, many of them moved to Harbin (China). After the 1949 Revolution in China, they turned to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who sent them to the United States, Canada, Australia and Brazil. Brazil was the first country to grant them visas. The main wave of migration of Old Believers to Brazil took place in 1957–1958, that is, after the policy of nationalization of the New State carried out in 1937–1945 by President Getúlio Vargas, whose goal was to turn all immigrants into Brazilian citizens by banning their native language in both official and everyday communication. Thus, the Old Believers managed to fully preserve their religious, cultural and linguistic identity due to the hermetic nature of their communities and the preservation of their traditional way of life. The dialect of the Old Believers of Brazil retains the typical features of the Nizhny Novgorod dialect of the nineteenth century, in which archaic linguistic features and semantic shifts in the meaning of words were preserved. However, it also contains lexical innovations denoting new concepts of modern life, Spanish and Portuguese borrowings and their adaptation. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, several Old Believer families decided to return to Russia under the State Programme to Assist the Voluntary Resettlement to Russia of Compatriots Living Abroad. Specifically, they returned to Primorye, thus completing their round-the-world trip.

Keywords: Old Believers, emigration, immigration, Russian language abroad, dialect of Old Believers in Latin America, repatriation programme

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This purpose of this article is to study the history of the emigration of Russian Old Believers to Brazil, analyse the reasons that allowed them to preserve their linguistic identity, and identify the features of the Russian dialect of Old Believers living in Latin America, and in Brazil in particular.

Our investigation into the history and customs of Old Believers relies heavily on the work of Y. M. Yukhimenko (Yukhimenko 2012) and D. V. Semikopov (Semikopov 2021).

The history of the emigration of Old Believers to Brazil, the integration of immigrants into Brazilian society and the preservation of the Russian language in their new homeland have been the subject of studies by descendants of Russians who emigrated to Brazil, including M. E. Iachinski Mendes (Iachinski Mendes 2019), S. A. Ruseishvili (Ruseishvili 2018, 2020), D. C. Fatuch Rabinowitz (Fatuch Rabinowitz 2008), A. Bytsenko (Bytsenko 2006), and A. Vorobieff (Vorobieff 2006).

Numerous research articles, chapters in books, and films have been produced on the unique phenomenon of preserving the emigration traditions, faith and language of Old Believers in Latin America, which dates back four generations, specifically the works of O. A. Matveichev², M. Bachmakova³, D. Antonelli⁴, V. V. Kobko and N. B. Kertchelaieva (Kobko, Kertchelaieva 2012), as well as the film directed by A. V. Pivovarov⁵.

Interest in the phenomenon of Old Believers has increased as a direct consequence of the Old Believers resettlement programme and their return to the Russian Far East. Numerous documents and articles appeared in the media, and documentary films were made on the subject⁶.

Our analysis of the features of the dialect of Old Believers in Latin America owes much to the text of Danila Zaitsev's *The Life and Times of Danila Terentievich Zaitsev* (Zaitsev 2015), as well as to the research of dialectologist O. G. Rovnova⁷.

² Matveichev O. 2019. Chto stalo s russkimi staroverami, kotorye poselilis' v Braziliu [What Happened to the Russian Old Believers Who Settled in Brazil]. *Cyrillitsa*. 26.10.2019. URL: cyrillitsa.ru/actual/122926-chto-stalo-s-russkimi-staroverami-koto.html (accessed 9.01.2022).

³ Bachmakova M. 2014. Como os Velhos Crentes mantêm suas tradições no mundo moderno. *Gazeta Russa*. 22.11.2014. URL: br.rbth.com/sociedade/2014/11/22/como_os_velhos_crentes_mantem_suas_tradicoes_no_mundo_moderno_28363 (accessed 9.01.2022).

⁴ Antonelli D. 2018. Russos na terra dos pinheiros. *Revista Ideias*. 07.06.2018. URL: revistaideias.com.br/2018/06/07/russos-na-terra-dos-pinheiros/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

⁵ Pivovarov A. 2020. Kak zhivut russkie starobriadtzy v Yuzhnoy Amerike [How Russian Old Believers Live in South America]. URL: youtube.com/watch?v=17-3EGQ1aAw (accessed 09.01.2022).

⁶ Makarova E. 2017. Pereekhavshim na Dal'niy Vostok staroveram pomogut adaptirovat'sya [Old Believers Who Have Moved to the Far East Will Receive Help to Adapt]. *Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic*. 26.04.2017. URL: minvr.gov.ru/presscenter/news/pereekhavshim-na-dalniy-vostok-staroveram-pomogut-adaptirovatsya-4923/ (accessed 09.01.2022); Reassentamento dos compatriotas – velhos ritualistas no Extremo Oriente. Portal de informações sobre as possibilidades de reassentamento dos fiéis Velhos Ritualistas no Extremo Oriente. URL: navostok.info/por/ (accessed 09.01.2022); Chesnokova E. 2017. Extremo Oriente russo gera interesse na América Latina. *Sputnik Brasil*. 02.04.2017. URL: sputniknewsbrasil.com.br/20170402/latino-americanos-extremo-oriente-russo-8049919.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

⁷ Rovnova O. 2014. Zdes, v Bolivii, starovery prekrasno sokhraniayut russkiy iazyk [Here, in Bolivia, Old Believers Perfectly Preserve the Russian language]. *Perunica*. 24.12.2014. URL: perunica.ru/kultura/8958-zdes-v-bolivii-starovery-prekrasno-sokhranyayut-russkiy-yazyk.html (accessed 09.01.2022); Rovnova O. 2018. Kak govoriat russkie starobriadtzy Latinskoy Ameriki [How Russian Old Believers in Latin America Speak]. *Radio Rossii*. 21.11.2018. URL: youtu.be/Gsdwbt4-Cto (accessed 09.01.2022); Makeev A. 2018. Povest' i zhitie "rusos barbudos" [The Life and Times of "Rusos Barbudos"]. *Russkiy Mir*. 05.05.2018. URL: rusmir.media/2018/05/05/rovnova/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

Who Are Old Believers?

The Russia of the seventeenth century was in dire need of reforms to modernize the state, and the Orthodox Church yearned for a moral renewal. The goal of the church reforms of Patriarch Nikon of Moscow was to unify the sacred texts. The Old Church Slavonic translations of the Holy Scriptures and liturgical books, which were copied by hand, contained numerous discrepancies and distortions, and thus had to be brought into line with the Greek versions. The return to Greek rites and texts was rejected outright by supporters of the old faith, who believed that the Church had been reformed to match a dubious Greek model, since the Greeks had initially been allied with the Catholics, before finding themselves under the rule of the Muslim Turks. The role of the leader of the “schismatics” was given to Protopope Avvakum⁸.

Old Believers, therefore, are supporters of the rituals that were universally practiced before the church reform of 1654, which was carried out during the reign of Tsar Alexis. The ruler sided with Patriarch Nikon in the latter’s standoff with Protopope Avvakum. Old Believers were subsequently subjected to centuries of persecution, until 1905, when Tsar Nicholas II signed the “Decree on Strengthening the Principles of Religious Tolerance.” The Council Code of 1649 had imposed the death penalty for crimes against the Orthodox Church and faith, and this article was extended to Old Believers after 1654. The most prominent preachers among the Old Believers were the monk Abraham (1672), the noblewomen Feodosia Morozova, Evdokia Urusova and Maria Danilova (1675). Other leaders of the Old Believer movement – the protopopes Avvakum and Lazarus, the deacon Feodor, and the monk Epiphanius – were exiled to the remote town of Pustozersk beyond the Arctic Circle, where they suffered terrible torture and died by immolation (Yukhimenko 2012).

These acts of persecution, torture and execution were justified not only by the tough position adopted by the tsarist authorities to the Old Believer movement, but also by the stance of the Old Believers themselves, which bordered on fanaticism. As is known, some Old Believers preferred to be burned alive rather than be forced to convert to a new faith, since they believed that self-immolation was a direct path to the salvation of the soul.

The History of Emigration

The Russian Far East and Primorye

In an effort to preserve everyday Orthodox life and escape pressure from the state and the church, the Old Believers started to move to the edges of Russia, to the forests and “deserts,” where the power of the state was weaker (Ibid.: 22–23). In their flight

⁸ Semikopov D. 2021. 11 voprosov o staroobriadtsakh [11 Questions about Old Believers]. Arzamas. 23.08.2021. URL: youtu.be/Gsdwb4-Cto (accessed 09.01.2022).

from the “world of the Antichrist,” the Old Believers went further and further east, to Siberia and the Far East, to Primorye and the most sparsely populated areas of the country.

Manchuria and Harbin

However, when Soviet power, with its collectivization and collective farms, made its way to the Russian Far East, the Old Believers started to move *en masse* to Manchuria. Two routes brought them to China: one group crossed the border from Altai to Xinjiang province, while the second fled from Primorye, crossing the Amur River, to settle in Harbin. These groups remain distinct to this day (called Xinjiang Russians and Harbin Russians, respectively) in terms of their language and customs, which sometimes leads to disagreements between the two. In fact, as O. G. Rovnova, a researcher of Old Believer dialects, notes, they are all descendants of the Nizhny Novgorod *Kerzhaks* (Old Believers). Rovnova established the proximity of their dialects to the modern dialects of the northeast of Nizhny Novgorod, the southwest of Kirov, and the east of Kostroma Oblast⁹.

In the late nineteenth century, the tsarist government decided to build the China-East Road, part of the Trans-Siberian Railway, or the Siberian Route, which would cut the distance to Vladivostok.

To this end, the government entered into an agreement with China that would see the railway lines pass through Manchuria. Harbin would serve as the main hub city of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Built in 1898 on Chinese territory, the city would remain a typical Russian provincial town for some twenty-five years after the revolution, a place where representatives of different religions coexisted without any restrictions. Pockets of Russian émigrés emerged in Harbin, Shanghai and certain other Chinese cities, and the Russian people there published their own newspapers, built schools, and were active in public life¹⁰ (Vorobieff 2006: 161). By 1920, the Russian-speaking population in Harbin had reached 100,000 (out of 430,261 total residents), far greater than in any other city outside Russia (Fatuch Rabinowitz 2008: 24).

The Old Believers lived in Manchuria for around twenty-five years, preserving their centuries-old traditions. However, the situation changed dramatically following the Chinese Revolution in 1949, when the Communist government demanded that foreigners leave the country. The Old Believers were thus faced with a choice: to either go back to Russia (by this point, the Soviet Union) or to emigrate to yet another coun-

⁹ Rovnova O. 2014. Zdes, v Bolivii, starovery prekrasno sokhraniaiut russkiy iazyk [Here, in Bolivia, Old Believers Perfectly Preserve the Russian language]. *Perunica*. 24.12.2014. URL: perunica.ru/kultura/8958-zdes-v-bolivii-starovery-prekrasno-sokhranyayut-russkiy-yazyk.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

¹⁰ Matveichev O. 2019. Chto stalo s russkimi staroverami, kotorye poselilis' v Braziliu [What Happened to the Russian Old Believers Who Settled in Brazil]. *Cyrillitsa*. 26.10.2019. URL: cyrillitsa.ru/actual/122926-chto-stalo-s-russkimi-staroverami-koto.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

try. They ended up turning to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for help, who in 1953 promptly sent them to Hong Kong, where the headquarters of the UN Refugee Agency were located. From there, having received the necessary documents, they travelled through the Philippines to Argentina, Israel, Canada, the United States, and Brazil (Kobko, Kertchelaieva 2012). S. A. Ruseishvili, who has published written extensively about the emigration of Old Believers to Brazil, notes the following about this period:

“One of the few ways out of this situation was the resettlement programmes in other countries, such as Australia, Argentina, Israel, Canada, the United States and Brazil. Throughout the 1950s, thanks to the efforts of the Far East Office of the International Refugee Organization, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that replaced it in 1952, as well as the Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe, Russians were able to obtain travel documents for stateless persons and apply for visas one of the receiving countries. The UNHCR and the Brazilian consulate were located in Hong Kong, and it is from there that the Russian refugees were transported by ship to Santos and Rio de Janeiro” (Ruseishvili 2020: 68).

Brazil

The main wave of emigration of Old Believers to Brazil took place in 1957–1958, thus completing the stages of resettlement of Russians to this country. According to the National Institute of Immigration and Colonization, a total of 3416 Russian refugees came to Brazil from 1950 to 1958.¹¹

Because they arrived in the 1950s, the Old Believers managed to avoid the nationalization campaign carried out in Brazil by the Getúlio Vargas administration in 1937–1945, which aimed to turn all emigrants into Brazilian citizens by outlawing their native language – not only in official communication, but in everyday life too (Iachinski Mendes 2019: 276), (Petrova 2020: 116). This is what allowed the Old Believers to preserve their national, cultural and linguistic identity.

The Old Believers who had arrived in Brazil made their way to the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, as well as to the southeast of the country. The Brazilian government provided immigrants with significant benefits. They were offered free travel to Brazil by sea, free rail travel to their final destination within the country, a plot of land and a relocation allowance (Vorobieff 2006: 36). The rules for

¹¹ Campos G. B. 2015. Dois séculos de imigração no Brasil. A construção da imagem e papel social dos estrangeiros pela imprensa entre 1808 e 2015. Tese de Doutorado. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Rio de Janeiro. Cit. ex. (Ruseishvili 2018).

engaging in gainful employment, acquiring land, obtaining loans, and so on, are described in detail by A. Bytsenko's in her master's dissertation¹².

Ideological and eugenic considerations meant that the Emigration Service would not accept Jews, as well as people suspected of harbouring communist beliefs, single women, the elderly and the infirm. To quote Ruseishvili once again:

“It should be noted that the Brazilian government accepted World War II refugees, not because of humanitarian principles, but because it wanted to fill the shortage of workers in skilled labourer positions in the growing industrial sectors and in mechanized agriculture. Those who applied to move to Brazil were selected by a government commission created specifically for this purpose in camps set up in Europe for displaced persons. Selection criteria included nationality, the ability to work, and political views. The Brazilian government, still influenced by the anti-communist and nationalist sentiments of the 1930s, preferred to take skilled industrial workers or farmers who were potentially willing to assimilate into the country's cultural mainstream and openly declared their anti-communist views” (Ruseishvili 2020: 68).

But the Old Believers were ideal “migration material” (a term used in the official documentation of those times): they were known to be exceptionally hardworking and responsible. The was just one obstacle: family communities did not want to be separated, and they would only move as a single group (Ruseishvili 2018: 121–128).

The initial years were not easy: the settlers were first sent to cut wood, a profession that caused growing dissatisfaction among them, as it was not one of the skills they had typically mastered as farmers. The situation was saved by A. Muravyov-Apostol, who supervised the settlers on behalf of the World Council of Churches. He was instrumental in the acquisition of 6000 acres of land with forest and a river in the municipality of Ponta Grossa in the state of Paraná. The landscape reminded them of central Russia, only the vegetation was tropical. These were the beginnings of the hacienda of Santa Cruz in Paraná. The Old Believers went about their usual business: they ploughed virgin lands, planted vegetable gardens, built houses of worship, and wooden huts to live in. The buildings were constructed in the Russian style, from logs, with saunas and Russian stoves.

The lands were unsuitable for farming, and farmers bought potassium fertilizer by the tonne¹³. The Old Believers themselves would later recall that they did not quite understand at first how to work on the new land, what fertilizers to use, and how to care

¹² Bytsenko A. 2006. *Imigração da Rússia para o Brasil no Início do Século XX. Visões do Paraíso e do Inferno*. University of São Paulo.

¹³ Pivovarov A. 2020. *Kak zhivut russkii staroobriadtsy v Yuzhnoy Amerike* [How Russian Old Believers Live in South America]. URL: youtube.com/watch?v=17-3EGQ1aAw (accessed 09.01.2022).

for crops they had never encountered before. They also worked for German settlers who had come from the Volga Region and understood Russian; thus, communication was not an issue. They learned how to plant rice from their German Volga neighbours.

Four years after settling, the colony started to turn a profit, even managing to get their buckwheat, rice, potatoes and sunflowers sold in Rio de Janeiro. Their apiaries produced up to 10,000 tonnes of honey per year, and the dairy products sold by Old Believers were sold throughout the region. Over the next 50 years, they purchased new lands, including another ranch in the state of Mato Grosso. There are currently around three thousand Old Believers living in Brazil. They have communities in the states of Paraná, Mato Grosso, Goiás and Tocantins, where they grow soybeans, beans, rice, cotton and sunflowers¹⁴. An exchange of sorts of culinary traditions took part between the Old Believers and their Brazilian neighbours: the Brazilians developed a taste for *tvorog* and sour cream and learned how to make *pierogi*, while the Old Believers learned how to make *feijoada* and rice bread¹⁵.

Traditions and Customs

Ideally, Old Believer communities should be isolated completely from civilization: in order to protect their children from the vices of the modern world, they choose the most inaccessible and remote places to settle. Whenever alcoholics, drug addicts and nonbelievers appear nearby, the Old Believers will up sticks, leaving the buildings and ploughed lands, and move on to an even remoter location, ploughing and fertilizing virgin soil, planting vegetable gardens and orchards, and engaging in fishing. They are not interested in the trappings of civilization and are not afraid of hardship or harsh climates.

Old Believers wear traditional nineteenth century garb. Men wear multi-coloured shirts and a belt that separates their “two bodies,” and they must always wear a beard. Women, meanwhile, wear a *sarafan* type of dress and a scarf (called a *shashmura*)¹⁶. The man of the house goes out and earns a living, while the woman stays at home, takes care of the children, cooks, weaves and sews traditional clothes, embroiders belts, does the household chores, and takes care of the livestock. She is the custodian of the hearth and the Russian language, which she passes on to her children¹⁷.

¹⁴ Matveichev O. 2019. Chto stalo s russkimi staroverami, kotorye poselilis' v Brazili [What Happened to the Russian Old Believers Who Settled in Brazil]. *Cyrillitsa*. 26.10.2019. URL: cyrillitsa.ru/actual/122926-chto-stalo-s-russkimi-staroverami-koto.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

¹⁵ Antonelli D. 2018. Russos na terra dos pinheirais. *Revista Ideias*. 07.06.2018. URL: revistaideias.com.br/2018/06/07/russos-na-terra-dos-pinheirais/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Makeev A. 2018. Povest' i zhitie “rusos barbudos” [The Life and Times of “Rusos Barbudos”]. *Russkiy Mir*. 05.05.2018. URL: rusmir.media/2018/05/05/rovnova/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

The woman preserves the purity of the Russian language, something that the man, who is engaged in his business in the new homeland, often cannot do. Old Believers do not share food or kitchenware with people of other faiths, and they do not buy food in shops (except for salt, tea and coffee), growing everything themselves on their farms. Smoking and eating at restaurants are strictly forbidden. The only alcohol (*brazhka*) that may be consumed must be homemade, by the community, and only on Sundays¹⁸.

Life in the community is closed: Old Believers do not take out loans from banks, preferring to borrow money from fellow believers, and they conduct business among their own¹⁹. If a “brother” finds himself in a difficult situation, his fellow believers are obliged to come to his aid, even if they do not know him personally. Old Believers are reluctant to communicate with the outside world, although they have no qualms about buying the equipment they need – both agricultural and household – wherever they can. Many families even have their own aeroplanes, as it would be impossible to get to neighbouring villages otherwise. By Brazilian standards, Old Believers are extremely well off.

Technically, television is prohibited (except when it serves educational purposes – for example, children may be allowed to watch Russian cartoons to help them with their Russian studies). However, all homes have internet access, which allows the family to talk to relatives from different countries or continents.

Consanguine marriage is prohibited up to the seventh generation: the genealogy of each clan is perfectly traced, and Old Believers typically arrange the marriages of their children with colonies located in Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, the United States or Australia. Thus, Old Believer communities in different countries are connected by kinship ties (Vorobieff 2006: 48). Marriages are usually strong, although they are not registered in the chapels and *bespopovtsy*.²⁰ Divorce does happen, although there are certain moral obstacles to it. Girls tend to marry early, at 14–16 years of age. A typical family has between ten and fourteen children.

The abundance of “schools of thought” in different communities of Old Believers means that their customs and beliefs often differ from each other.

¹⁸ Matveichev O. 2019. Chto stalo s russkimi staroverami, kotorye poselilis' v Braziliu [What Happened to the Russian Old Believers Who Settled in Brazil]. *Cyrillitsa*. 26.10.2019. URL: cyrillitsa.ru/actual/122926-chto-stalo-s-russkimi-staroverami-koto.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

¹⁹ Bachmakova M. 2014. Como os Velhos Crentes mantêm suas tradições no mundo moderno. *Gazeta Russa*. 22.11.2014. URL: br.rbth.com/sociedade/2014/11/22/como_os_velhos_crentes_mantem_suas_tradicoes_no_mundo_moderno_28363 (accessed 09.01.2022).

²⁰ As Old Believers are not recognized by the Russian state or church, they cannot comply with the rules of the church hierarchy and have their own priest. The fact that there were no bishops or priests of the ancient, pre-Nikon order in the Old Believers was painfully obvious by the 1670s–1680s. Hence the variety of “schools” of Old Believers, from *beglopovovtsy* (priests ordained in the official church but who had later broken away from it – so-called “fugitive priests” – and then accepted into Old Believer communities) to chapels and *bespopovtsy*. The latter, upon the decision of a meeting of the community, choose a mentor from among the worthy laymen, who receives a blessing to carry out the service. Everyone in the community observes fasts and takes part in all the services. The person chosen as priest performs the service.

In some colonies, children go to public schools, where they learn to read and write, and also study Portuguese or Spanish. However, it is not uncommon in villages that practice a stricter form of the religion to excommunicate members of the community for sending their children to a mainstream school. Each colony must have its own school, where an Old Believer teacher is brought in, for a fee, to teach the children Old Church Slavonic and liturgical singing from the first grade. In most cases, children only complete primary school, as it is believed that four years are sufficient to toil the land. Thus, children grow up in villages where they speak Russian exclusively, thereby preserving the purity of their native language.

Features of the Dialect of Russian Spoken by Old Believers in Latin America

The Russian spoken by Old Believers is not a literary language, but a living dialect that was spoken in Russia in the nineteenth century.

It is often the case that émigrés lose their native language by the third generation, meaning that the grandchildren of emigrants are typically unable to communicate in the language of their grandparents.

This is not the case in Old Believer settlements, where the Russian language remains intact, spoken fluently by the fourth generation of settlers. Researchers note that while Russian continues to thrive among Old Believers living in Latin America, the same cannot be said for those in the United States and Australia, where the children of settlers (the second generation) start to lose their native tongue. This can be explained by the fact that emigrants in these countries are often actively involved in business and economic activities there. This leads to situations in which a grandmother living in Bolivia, say, and her grandson in Alaska or Oregon natively speak completely different languages and do not understand each other²¹.

Our analysis of the language of Old Believers is based on the memoirs of the Old Believer Danila Zaitsev, *The Life and Times of Danila Terentieovich Zaitsev* (Zaitsev 2015).

The book is a unique document, a record, as it were, of the spoken language of Old Believers in Latin America. As we know, dialects exist in oral form only, but this book is an exception. Zaitsev completed just four years of schooling. The book, which is 700 pages long, is written in block letters, with no spacing between words, which are transcribed phonetically. The dialectologist O. G. Rovnova, who studies the language of Old Believers, spent three years rewriting Zaitsev's book in accordance with exist-

²¹ Rovnova O. 2014. Zdes, v Bolivii, starovery prekrasno sokhraniaiut russkiy iazyk [Here, in Bolivia, Old Believers Perfectly Preserve the Russian language]. *Perunica*. 24.12.2014. URL: perunica.ru/kultura/8958-zdes-v-bolivii-starovery-prekrasno-sohranyayut-russkiy-yazyk.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

ing spelling rules, and compiled an annotated dictionary to make the work easier to read. She has published numerous works on the pronunciation and vocabulary of Old Believers, not only those in Latin America, but all over the world.

The dialect maps plotted by Rovnova on the basis of her research show that the native dialect of the Old Believers originated from the Nizhny Novgorod Governorate, and from there, the Kerzhaks spread it throughout the world²².

Rovnova notes that the Old Believers are unwilling polyglots: they easily learn the language of the country to which fate has brought them, yet they speak Russian exclusively at home. For example, the elders who were forced to leave China towards the end of the 1950s claim that they can speak Mandarin. In Brazil, Old Believers speak “Brazilian” (not Portuguese) in their dealings with the outside world, and in Bolivia and Argentina, they speak “Colina” (not Spanish), which is taken from the word *colla*, the name of a native tribe²³.

Old Believers are true nomads. As we mentioned above, they have no problem moving from country to country, leaving their belongings behind and starting anew. According to Zaitsev, his family, which included 11 children, moved 60 times in search of the “promised land.”

The language of the Old Believers was not mummified: it is a living and breathing language. But distance and isolation have meant that it has developed differently to the Russian spoken in the motherland.

Phonetics

Phonetic differences are a consequence not only of the place where a given community of Old Believers currently resides, but also of the part of China from which they emigrated. Harbin Russians are convinced that their speech is more correct and closer to standard Russian, and they look down on Xinjian Russians because of this. Even though the oldest living Old Believers were born in China and have never known Russia, they consider themselves Russian (Fatuch Rabinowitz 2008: 47), and their connection to the motherland is very important for them.

Xinjian Old Believers pronounce *s* instead of *ts*: *syplyonok* (and not *tsyplyonok* – “chicken”); *s Marfoy sapalis* (not *tsapalis* – “Martha and I quarreled”); *seluyu rybu* (not *tseluyu rybu* – “a whole fish”); *za amerikansom* (not *za amerikantsom* – “for the American”); *usadba v sentre* (not *usadba v tsentre* – “the farmstead is in the town centre”); *dva nemsu* (not *dva nemtsa* – two Germans) *ushla k paragvaysu* (not *ushla k paragvaytsu* – “left for a Paraguayan”); *argentins* (not *argentinets* – “Argentinian”); *v konse*

²² Makeev A. 2018. Povest' i zhitie “rusos barbudos” [The Life and Times of “Rusos Barbudos”]. *Russkiy Mir*. 05.05.2018. URL: rusmir.media/2018/05/05/rovnova/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

²³ Rovnova O. 2018. Kak govoriat russkie starobriadtsy Latinskoy Ameriki [How Russian Old Believers in Latin America Speak]. *Radio Rossii*. 21.11.2018. URL: youtu.be/GsdwbT4-Cto (accessed 09.01.2022).

konsov (not *v kontse kontsov* – “at the end of the day”); *zolotsa* (“gold”); *migrasionnaya sluzhba* (not *migratsionnaya sluzhba* – “migration service”); *vkones* (not *vkonets* – “in the end”) [5].

Phonetic phenomena that are common to people from Xinjian and Harbin include:

- the sounds *ch* and *shch* (or *sh*) are interchanged: *synoshchek* (*synochek* – “son”); *shchaynik* (*chaynik* – “kettle”); *lavoshka* (*lavochka* – “bench”); *rasshitatsya* (*rasschitat-sya* – “to settle accounts”); *skushno* (*skuchno* – “boring”); *perevodshik* (*perevodchik* – “translator”); *boroda gusta, rusa, poshti bela* (*boroda gusta, rusa, pochti bela* – “[his] beard is thick, blonde, almost white”). For example, in Zaitsev’s book, written in the Xinjian dialect, we encounter: *zhenchiny* (*zhenshchiny*), *soobchil* (*soobshchil* – “[he] informed/told”); *obchatsya* (*obchatsya* – “to talk/chat”), *voobche* (*voobshche* – “whatsoever”); *proshshayutsya* (*proshchayutsya* – “they are saying goodbye”), *isho* (*ishchu* – “I am looking”), *ishshut* (*ishchut* – “they are looking”); *proshshe* (*proshche* – “easier:”); *pomorshilis* (*pomorshchilis* – “winked”); *yashsherki* (*yashcherki* – “lizards”); *okreshshu syna* (*okreshchu syna* – “I will baptize my son”); *chichas* (*seychas* – “now”); *chizhalo* (*difficult*); *skupushsha* (*skupushcha* – “stingy”); *voobche* (*voobshche* – “whatsoever”), *zaroshshe* (*zarosshe* – “overgrown”); *pushshe* (*pusshe* – “more”); *tashshila* (*tashchila* – “[she/it] dragged”);

- the consonants *k* and *kh* are interchanged: *khryosna* (*kryostnaya* – “godmother”); *nekrest* (*nekhrist* – “unbeliever”); *nikhto* (*nikto* – “no one”); *bakcha* (*bakhcha* – “melon field”);

- when vocalizing, the vowels *u*, *a*, and *e* are replaced by *yu* and *ya*: *pachkyu deneg* (*pachku deneg* – “a wad of money”); *kartochkyu* (*kartochku* – “card”); *kopeykyu* (*kopeyku* – “Kopeck”); *v rechkyu* (*v rechku* – “into the river”); *na tu zhe tochkyu* (*na tu zhe tochku* – “to the same point”); *tolkyu* (*tolko* – “only”); *aviyakompaniya* (*avia-kompaniya* – “airline”); *charodeykya* (*charodeyka* – “sorceress”); *Zaykya* (*Zayka* – a term of endearment); *s tyatyay* (*s tyetyoy* – “with [my] aunt”); *poprosil denyag* (*poprosil deneg* – “[he] asked for money”); *bolshoya spasibo* (*bolshoye spasibo* – “many thanks”); *s Maryay* (*s Maryoy* – “with Mary”); *i tak daleya* (*i tak dalee* – “and so on”); *v glubokiya lesa* (*v glubokiye lesa* – “deep into the woods”); *Marfonkya* (*Marfonka*); *bystrenkya* (*by-strenko* – “quickly”); *dengyami vyruchil* (*dengami vyruchil* – “he helped me out with money”); *nas troya* (*nas troye* – “three are three of us”); *bolshoya sozhaleniye* (*bolshoye sozhaleniye* – “a big regret”); *vosem bratyav* (*vosem bratyev* – “eight brothers”); *rodnoya* (*rodnoy* – “native”); *charodeykya* (*charodeyka* – “sorceress”); *Froskya* (*Froska*); *khristiyane* (*khristiane* – “Christian”); *zhili by derevnyay* (*zhili by derevnaya*); *privychkya* (*privychka* – “habit”); *malyya gruppy* (*malaye grupp* – “a small group”); *s Kharitinyay* (*s Kharitinyo*); *Vankya* (*Vanka*); *natrenkyalsya* (*natrenkalsa*); *vesyolenkyay* (*veselen-kiy* – “jolly”); *syali na traktor* (*seli na traktor* – “they got into the tractor”); *khozyaykya* (*khozyayka* – “woman of the house”); *s dyadyay* (*s dyadey* – “with [my] uncle”); *po-prezhnyamu* (*po-prezhnemu* – “as before”); *bolshoya spasibo* (*bolshoye spasibo* – “many thanks”); *privychkya* (*privychka* – “habit”); *svechkya* (*svechka* – “candle”); *spetsiyalnoye*

mesto (*spetsialnoye mesto* – “special place”); *ya syal i gorko zaplakal* (*ya sel i gorko zaplakal* – “I sat down and wept”); *rechky* (*rechka* – “river”); *teyetry* (*teatry* – “theatres”); *sushit boby soyavy* (*sushit boby soya* – “to dry soya beans”).

Some vowels and consonants undergo elision: *mnya* (*menya* – “me, of me”); *pouzhnat* (*pouzhinat* – “to have dinner”); *strechayutsya* (*vstrechayutsya* – “they are dating”); *spominayu* (*vspominayu* – “I recall”). There are also cases where additional consonants are inserted between vowels: *idivot* (*idiot* – “idiot”); *idivotnichala nad nimi* (*idiotnichala nad nimi* – “she made them laugh”).

Morphological Features

In terms of morphology, the full forms of adjectives are often replaced with short forms: *vtoru doch* (*vtoruyu doch* – “the second daughter”); *no pervo* (*no pervoye* – “but first”); *v staru derevnyu* (*v staruyu derevnyu* – “to the old village”); *tako rasstoyanie* (*takoye rasstoyanie* – “such a distance”); *nekotory* (*nekotorye* – “some, a certain”); *slaba* (*slabaya* – “weak”); *khoroshi* (*khoroshie* – “good”); *skore* (*skoreye* – “quick”); *bela* (*belaya* – “white”); *kholodna* (*kholodnaya* – “cold”); *dobry lyudi* (*dobrye lyudi* – “kind people”); *mnogi* (*mnogie* – “many, lots”); *kitaysko gosudarstvo* (*kitayskoye gosudarstvo* – “the Chinese government”); *bankovski rekvizity* (*bankovskiy rekvizity* – “bank details”); *zhenchina vysoka, stroyna i krasiva, no vredna, zavidлива, leniva* (*zhenshchina vysokaya, stroynaya i krasivaya, no vrednaya, lenivaya* – “the lady is tall, slim and beautiful, but she’s spiteful, lazy and the jealous type”); *kotoru nevzlyubit* (*kotoru nevzlyubit* – “to whom he will take a disliking”); *bolye i bolye* (*bolyeye i bolyeye* – “more and more”); *zarplata nizka* (*zarplata nizkaya* – “low wage”); *argentinska* (*argentinskaya* – “Argentinian”); *materinny slyozy* (*materinnye slyozy* – “mother’s tears”); *rechki svetly rybny, no vse zaroshe* (*rechki svetlye rybnye, no vse zaroshey* – “the rivers are clear and full of fish, but everything is overgrown”); *lyubu otdam za tebya* (*lyubuyu otdam za tebya* – “I will give any of them for you”); *kaka roskosh* (*kakaya roskosh* – “what luxury”); *kazhdu nedelyu* (*kazhduyu nedelyu* – “every week”); *ikhno staranie* (*ikhnoye staranie* – “their efforts”); *videli eyo uplakannu* (*videli eyo uplakannuyu* – “we saw her crying”); *bolshi podryady* (*bolshiye podryady* – “big contracts”); *ni v kaki* (*ni v kakie* – “in no way”); *vremennoyu molennu* (*vremennuyu molennuyu* – “temporary prayer room”); *znakomstvo bylo khoroshe* (*znakomstvo bylo khoroshee* – “it was nice to get to know [them/him/her/you]”); *dokhshi myshi* (*dokhshiye myshi* – “dead mice”); *kazhdo viskresenye* (*kazhdoye viskresenye* – “every Sunday”); *kaki-to pridirki* (*kakiye-to pridirki* – “some nitpicks”); *mnogi* (*mnogie* – “many, several”).

Neologisms

Old Believers typically do not accept many of the lexemes that appear in the normative language, choosing instead to replace new concepts that have appeared in our reality with ancient words that then acquire a new meaning: *ukhazhorka* means

“girlfriend”; *na besovskikh kopytchikav* means “in high heels” (lit. “in devil’s hooves”). Cartoons are called *poskakushki* (lit. “skits”); teachers are called *klassnitsa*; fairy lights are called *pomigushki* (lit. “winkers”); headbands are *odevashka*; and instead of saying “loan” or “credit,” which exist in the Old Believer dialect, they prefer to say *vzyat na vyplatku* (“take for repayment”).

Word Formation

Foreign words are transformed according to Russian word-formation models: *poshel potelefonil Filatu* (“I went and phoned Filat”); *meksinanin* (“Mexican”); *masonin* (“freemason”); *zarabotayu i abilitiruyu svoyu lodku* (“I’ll earn some money and get my boat up and moving”); *gazolinka* (from the Spanish *gasolinera* – “petrol station”); *nizky klass konfliktivny* (“non-conflict”); *ushel k baptistam* (“he converted to Baptism”); *proiskhodit korrupsyya* (“there’s corruption”). Old Believers say *brazilyanyets* (not *brazilyets* – “a Brazilian man”) and *bolivanyets* (not *boliviets* – “a Bolivian man”). Women are called, respectively, *brazilyukha* (“a Brazilian woman”), *bolivukha* (“a Bolivian woman”), *ispanukha* (“a Spanish woman”), *kitayukha* (“a Chinese woman”), *harbinukha* (“a woman from Harbin”) and *xinjiangukha* (“a woman from Xinjiang”). While the suffix *-ukh(a)* can carry negative connotations in standard Russian, this is not the case with the variant spoken by Old Believers. They also use the words *colya* and *colyukha* to refer to people from the Indian Colla tribe in Bolivia. “I was once mistaken for a ‘colyukha,’” Rovnova commented in an interview [5].

Archaisms

It is common knowledge that dialects are characterized by an abundance of archaic words. This is also true of the Old Believer’s dialect: *lednik* for *kholodilnik* (“refrigerator”); *pytat* for *sprashivat* (“to ask”); *vydyuzhit* for *vyterpet* (“to endure, suffer”); *oprostau nash dom* for *uidi iz nashego doma* (“leave our house”); *khudoj* for *plokhoy* (“bad”); and the obsolete Russian word *kufayka* is used to mean “sweater” or “jumper.”

Foreign Words

Foreign words that are not typically inflected in literary Russian do undergo inflection in the Old Believer’s dialect: *khodili v kinakh* (“they went to the cinema”); *30,000 cruzeirov v mesyats* (“30,000 cruzeiros per month”); *gringi zabili ves rynok* (“there were gringos all over the market”); *khodili po kazinam* (“they visited some casinos”). The process of adapting foreign nouns involves:

- a change of gender: *vovnutr zhungli* (“inside the jungle”), *khoroishuyu filmu propuskayut* (“they’re missing a good film”); *privezli produktu* (“they’ve brought the goods”);

- a change of number: *v biznesakh* (lit. “in businesses” to mean “in business”); *dolara pokoyu ne dayut* (lit. “the dollar do not bring peace”); *prazdnik pomidory* (lit. “a feast of tomato”);
- a change of the morphological form of the noun: *banok* (not *bank*) *stal pritesnyat* (“the bank started hassling us”).

Semantic Shifts

Words found in standard Russian take on a different meaning: *prazdnovat* (which means “to celebrate” in standard Russian) – to spend free time on Sundays and holidays; *proshshatsya* (“to say goodbye”) – to ask for forgiveness; *rovnya* (“equal, peer”) – a group of teenagers of the same age; *dokazyvat* (“to prove”) – to express dissatisfaction [with something or someone]; *rebyatyoshki* (“kids,” “guys”) – boys; *krutoi* (“strong,” “cool”) – fast; *skhvatyvat* (“to catch, capture”) – to vomit; *zapredstavlyatsya* (“to introduce oneself”) – to be cocky; *bazar* (“market, bazaar”) – shop; *poganyi* (“foul, unclean”) – a third-class citizen; *prostoi* (“simple”) – empty; *zloslovit kogo-l.* (“to slander”) – to call someone a name, to contradict oneself; *teryatsya* (“to be at a loss”) – to disappear without a trace; *rabocha* (“working”) – eager, zealous, diligent; *nelyzya nam slavitsya* (*slavitsya* – “to be known for sth.”) – we can’t become famous, public figures; *steklyannyi* (“glazed,” “glassy”) – brilliant, shiny; *snaryazhat svadbu* – to decorate the bride’s trousseau with embroidery; *velichat* (“to glorify,” “to dignify”) – to use a person’s patronymic when addressing or talking about them; *vypusk* (“issue”) – cattle shed; *rytsya* (“to delve, dig, burrow”) – to choose carefully; *kochevat* (“to wander, roam”) – to leave; *ves kapital provalila* – she spent all their money; *poklony* (“bows, curtsies”) – gifts for newlyweds; *poluchil blagoslovenie* (lit. “he received blessings”) – holy water; *vse chudyatsya* (lit. “everyone is imagining things”) – they are shocked, amazed; *predlog* (“pretext,” “preposition”) – offer, proposal; *tyanut* (“to pull, drag”) – to feel nauseated; *rodstvo* (“kinship”) – relatives; *vam ne nuzhno* (lit. “you don’t need...”) – it’s none of your business; *stegat* (“to quilt, lace, stitch”) – to experience cramps; *razna* (“various”) – different; *pererodok* (“degenerate”) – a child from an interracial marriage; *ne zaboťtes* – don’t worry about it; *tabor* (“a band of gypsies”) – campsite; *stroit* (“to build”) – to do; *proslavil menya masonom* (lit. “he made me a freemason”) – he declared; *prizhat* (“to grip, squeeze”) – to hug, embrace; *otvet* (“answer, reply”) – responsibility.

Foreign Loan Words

Interference of the Dominant Language

During Danila’s time in Brazil, borrowings from Brazilian Portuguese and the languages of the indigenous population started to appear in his Russian speech. Most of these denote concepts specific to the region: *raznosvetny arary*, *pirikity* (“multi-coloured *arary*, *pirikity*”; Port. *arara*, *piriquito* – parrot species); *tukany*, *vsyaki-razni*

makaki (“toucans, all kinds of *macaci*”; Port. *macaco* – “monkey”) *i onsy* (“and onça”; Port. onça – “jaguar”); *podkhodit krupnaya ryba: pintado, surubi, zhau, piri-putanga, pirarara, korvina, piyava, kurimba* (“big fish will do: pintado, surubim, jaú, piri-putanga, pirarara, corvina, piava, curimba”). “An insect of some sort crawled into the *mato*” (Port. *mato* – “woods, forest”); “he poured some *yerba mate*” (Port. *erva mate* – “maté tea”); “there was a *tumor* and he got cancer” (Port. *tumor* – “tumour”); “the Primavera do Leste *posto*” (Port. *posto de gasolina* – “petrol station”); “we went to the *telefónica brasileira*” (Port. *posto telefónico* – “telephone station”), *artificialmente* (“artificially”) *helped with the fish*; “they have an annual *agenda*”; “to show *bodegas* of all kinds” (Port. *bodega* – “pub”); “two *lots*, and they’re building a house” (Port. *lote* – “land plot”); “*comitiva* are coming” (Port. *comitiva* – “accompanying persons”).

A number of words and expressions of Spanish origin appear in Zaitsev’s language following his time in Bolivia, Argentina and Peru: “we bought a *chacra* with *fruta*” (Sp. *chacra* – “farm, farmyard”; *fruta* – fruit-bearing trees); “we went into the *inmobiliaria*” (Sp. *agencia inmobiliaria* – “real estate agency”); “on a *transbordador* boat” (Sp. *transbordador* – “ferryboat”); “the Spanish *virrey*” (Sp. *virrey* – “viceroys”); “Chilean men are considered *machisto*” (Sp. *macho* – “manly”); “the *stancer* declared” (Sp. *estancero* – “ranch owner”); “we met a Russian *científico*” (Sp. *científico* – “scientist”); “it’s good *experience*” (Sp. *experiencia* – “experience”); “there a lots of *depredators*” (Sp. *depredador* – “predator”); “a famous *vidente*” (Sp. *vidente* – “clairvoyant”).

Zaitsev’s time in the United States brought numerous Americanisms into his lexicon: “we went to the *casinos*”; “the *policeman* is right there”; “have them use *siding*”; “music, *barbecue*, and dancing.” He also started to write the time in the English manner: “until 14:00 p.m.”

In Russia, Danila uses Latin American terms to denote phenomena for which he does not know the Russian equivalent: “this is a forward-thinking *executiv*” (Sp. *executivo* – here “official”); “there are *pancartas* in Belgorod” (Sp. *pancartas* – “posters”); “I would like to add a deity and a *privat*” (Sp. *privado* – here “private property”).

The syntax demonstrates a clear influence of constructions that are typical of Romance languages: *I’ll take the bus; I thought you know how to fish; can you take this answer* [responsibility]; *low class, caught malaria*.

False Friends

Zaitsev’s book contained numerous so-called “false friends” of the translator, that is, words that are found in the Russian languages, but which have a different meaning: *your conpromiso* [responsibility] *is significant*, *professór* [teacher]; *there is a different book for each materia* [subject]; *we took a projector* [lamp] *with us; are the numeros* [numbers] *acceptable?*

Folk Etymology and Other Phenomena Characteristic of Colloquial Speech

Phenomena of folk etymology and other cases that are characteristic of colloquial speech are observed in the forms of nouns and verbs Zaitsev uses: *nadsmeshki* (“jokes, taunts”); *zagan passport* (“travel passport”); *symlenye* (“doubt”); *ne klansya* (“don’t bow”); *syodin* (“today”); *samodelashna lodka* (“homemade boat”); *oboi derevni* (“both villages”); *ya i otvetyu* (“I will reply”); *yaysty* (“eggs”); *s nyom ne rybachu* (“I don’t go fishing with him”); *ya yeyo spolyubil* (“I fell for her”); *one vzamuzhem* (“she is married”); *rossiets* (a Russian emigrant); *dolozhny svenchatsya* (“they should get married”); *sadyat v tyurmy* (“to throw in jail”); *chto khochut tvoryat* (“they do as they please”); *ya byl ne nuzhon* (“I wasn’t needed”); *v chyom vam pomogchi* (“how can I help you”)?

The pronunciation of specialized scientific terms is simplified: *isplotiryvaet devchonok* (“he exploits girls”); *ekspertiza* (“expert review”); *nastala epokha demokratov radikalnykh* (“the era of radical democrats is upon us”); *evkalipty* (“eucalyptus”); *ministr po energetike* (“energy minister”); *kandidat presidenta* (“candidate for president”); *eletriku proveli* (“they did electrical work”); *eksportiruie* (“export”).

We can thus conclude that the characteristic features of the dialect of the Old Believers are: the conservation of archaic linguistic features; word-formation models that are not characteristic of standard Russian; the emergence of lexical innovations; active borrowing and adaptation of Spanish and Portuguese vocabulary.

Old Believers Resettlement Programme

As of January 1, 2020, the population of the Russian Federation was 146.74 million people. This marks the second year in a row that a population decline has been observed: by almost 100,000 people in 2018, and by 35,600 people in 2019, according to the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat). The most realistic forecasts suggest that the population will decrease to 143 million people by 2036; under the worst-case scenario, this figure could be as low as 134.38 million people²⁴.

The State Programme to Assist the Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots Living Abroad has designated four locations for resettling Old Believers in Primorye and Amur Oblast. As we noted above, this is where the Old Believers lived before they moved to China. They appear to be the best candidates for settling in Primorye – while none of them were actually born in Russia, they nevertheless retain close emotional ties with their motherland and dream of “coming home.”

²⁴ Riazanova, O. 2020. Pochemu Rossiia gotova priniat' novykh zhtelej bez otkaza ot prezhnego grazhdanstva [Why Russia is Ready to Accept New Residents without Giving Up their Former Citizenship]. *Profil*. URL: profil.ru/politics/pochemu-rossiya-gotova-prinyat-novykh-zhtelej-bez-otkaza-ot-prezhnego-grazhdanstva-230384/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

In the same way that representatives of the Brazilian government promoted a programme of emigration to Brazil in Europe in the nineteenth century, officials from the Far East and Arctic Human Capital Development Agency visited Old Believer communities in Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay and Argentina to propose the idea of resettlement to the eastern part of their historical homeland²⁵. Participants in the resettlement programme would be offered a fast-track to Russian citizenship, a relocation subsidy of 240,000 roubles, plus 120,000 roubles for each family member, and all travel and transport expenses to their new place of residence would be reimbursed. The land would be provided on a rental basis, and unemployment benefits would be offered to those who cannot find work. They would also be provided with free medical care, free education, and other social services²⁶.

In addition to this, the government has been running the so-called “Hectare in the Far East” since 2016, whereby citizens can receive a hectare of land in the region for free²⁷. Considering that the typical Old Believer family consists of between 11 and 15 people, this is significant help. However, we should note that, in Latin America, Old Believers owned hundreds of hectares of land, harvesting two crops per year.

The process of resettling Old Believers has received much scrutiny from the media, which noted that it has slowed down in recent years as a result of the pandemic, and because certain negative reports have reached the communities in Latin America about it. The resettlement programme needs serious improvement: it does not account for the features of the Old Believers’ way of life, their traditions, education level, or professional skills, and it ignores the fact that they prefer to settle in secluded places. Old Believers coming to Russia know nothing about the law and run into red tape at almost every step in Russia²⁸.

Despite all this, they do not complain and continue to work and improve their lives. In Primorye, Old Believers mainly farm in the villages of Dersu in Krasnoarmeisky District and Lyubitskova in Dalnerechensky District, as well as in a community near

²⁵ Krilov V. 2018. Velhos Crentes radicados no Brasil, Uruguai e Bolívia viajarão ao Extremo Oriente russo. *Russia Beyond*. URL: br.rbth.com/estilo-de-vida/80488-velhos-crentes-no-brasil-voltarao-russia (accessed 09.01.2022).

²⁶ “Vozvrashchenie staroverov”: kak predlagaiut izmenit’ programmu pereseleniia sootchestvennikov [“Return of the Old Believers”: How it is Proposed to Change the Resettlement Programme for Compatriots]. 2017. TASS. 27.04.2017. URL: tass.ru/v-strane/4212858/ (accessed 09.01.2022); Reassentamento dos compatriotas – velhos ritualistas no Extremo Oriente. Portal de informações sobre as possibilidades de reassentamento dos fiéis Velhos Ritualistas no Extremo Oriente. URL: navostok.info/por/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

²⁷ Chesnokova E. 2017. Extremo Oriente russo gera interesse na América Latina. *Sputnik Brasil*. 02.03.2017 URL: sputniknews-brasil.com.br/20170402/latino-americanos-extremo-oriente-russo-8049919.html (accessed 09.01.2022).

²⁸ “Vozvrashchenie staroverov”: kak predlagaiut izmenit’ programmu pereseleniia sootchestvennikov [“Return of the Old Believers”: How it is Proposed to Change the Resettlement Programme for Compatriots]. 2017. TASS. 27.04.2017. URL: tass.ru/v-strane/4212858/ (accessed 09.01.2022); Makarova E. 2017. Pereekhavshim na Dal’niy Vostok staroveram pomogut adaptirovat’sia [Old Believers Who Have Moved to the Far East Will Receive Help to Adapt]. Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic. 26.04.2017. URL: minvr.gov.ru/presscenter/news/pereekhavshim-na-dalnyi-vostok-staroveram-pomogut-adaptirovatsya-4923/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

the city of Sovobodny in Amur Oblast. In total, they work over 7000 hectares of land. More than thirty children have been born in the returning communities, and ten new families have been forged²⁹.

And this is how the Old Believers completed their journey around the world, returning to the region they left following the 1917 Revolution.

Conclusion

As we can see, the Old Believers, who moved from Central Russia to Primorye, then from Primorye to China, then, in the 1950s, from China to Latin America, retained their linguistic identity for four generations, largely due to their hermetic lifestyle, the fact that each community had its own school, and the special role of women within the community, who, while staying at home and running the household, preserve the purity of the Russian language, passing it on to their children. The Old Believer dialect preserves numerous archaic linguistic features and semantic shifts in the meaning of words. At the same time, however, it is characterized by lexical innovations to denote new concepts of modern life, borrowings from Spanish and Portuguese, the adaptation of these words, and word formation devices that follow specific models of Old Believer Russian.

There is no way of telling whether the originality of the Old Believers' dialect will be preserved after repatriation to Primorye under the State Resettlement Programme. Despite the voluntary isolation in which the Old Believers live, standard Russian will likely seep into their dialect, and subsequent generations of Old Believers born in Russia will obviously lose the features of the dialect that were the subject of this paper.

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²⁹ Ekspert: pandemiia oslozhnila pereseleniie staroobriadtsev na Dal'nii Vostok. 2020. TASS. 22.09.2020. URL: tass.ru/obschestvo/9515679/ (accessed 09.01.2022).

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