

“Novgorod and the Hanse, Trade and Contact”

A. A. Zaliznjak (*Drevnenovgorodskij dialekt*) documents two syntactic constructions expressing quantity which involve arithmetic operations. Expressions like

О: НЪЖЬКА ДОВА ДЪСАТЬ БЪРКОВЬСКО БЪЗ [Б]ЪРКОВЬСКА... ОУ МЪСТОКА ОУ КОУЗНЬЦА БЪЗ ДОВОУ НОГОУТОУ ГРИВНА ‘for N twenty measures less one... from blacksmith M [is due] a *grivna* less two *nogata*’ (#B13)

express a quantity diminished by the amount specified by the prepositional complement; while expressions like

ПОЛЪ ЦЕТВЪРТЪ ГРВНѢ ‘half of four *grivna* = three and one half *grivna*’ (§4.11).

express a quantity diminished from the stated quantity by half of a unit of measurement or currency. The constructions, while not unique to Novgorod, occur there with greater richness and greater frequency than elsewhere in Slavic.

Analogues occur in language of the Hanse, suggesting that Novgorod’s constructions developed by language contact with the Hanseatic lingua franca (Low German with Scandinavian influence). The lingua franca was used above all for trade, a powerful force which sends commodities, people, culture, and language across boundaries of communities (Eric Wolff, *Europe and the People without History*). Amplified by colonization and political domination, in Latvia (Riga) and Estonia (Reval) the Hanseatic language triggered changes in all components of language. In contrast, in Novgorod interaction between foreigners and Novgorodians was limited to trade and then was mediated through translators. Overall, in Novgorod contact effects are found in the language of trade (and possibly the related sphere of law), but not beyond.

The moral is that the extent of language contact is contingent on external historical circumstances and modes of contact, in this instance trade, a mighty force.