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**CHALLENGING ISSUES OF RUSSIAN PHONOLOGY AND THEIR SOLUTIONS
(THE APPROACH OF L. V. SHCHERBA'S PHONOLOGICAL SCHOOL)**

Abstract

This article considers the challenging issues of Russian phonology, which for a long time have been the subject of disagreement and disputes between the two Russian phonological schools – The Leningrad (St Petersburg) School, whose founder was Academician Lev V. Shcherba and the Moscow School. The main issue of their controversy and debate is the vowel Y ([ɨ] as in *мы* 'you'), which according to St Petersburg phonologists has the status of a phoneme, while the Moscow phonological school made the non-recognition of Y phoneme status one of the School's relevant features distinguishing it among other schools. Another issue is soft velar (back-lingual) consonants long ago recognized by Petersburg phonologists as phonemes, however this view is not shared by all Russian phonologists. The third debatable issue is the phonological status of the long soft fricatives [šč] and [ž'ž']: many Petersburg phonologists consider them combinations of consonant phonemes with varying interpretations suggested by particular representatives of the School, while the representatives of the Moscow School consider them to form single phonemes. This article offers solutions to these fundamental problems, citing new examples and expressing new ideas on the procedures for making phonological decisions based on this material.

Keywords: morphonology, alternations, phonological status, vowel <ы>, soft velar consonants <к'>, <г'>, <х'>, soft fricative consonants <ш:'>, <ж:'>.

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