

LANGUAGE CONTACT IN THE CIRCUMPOLAR WORLD

II

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ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ КОНТАКТЫ В ЦИРКУМПОЛЯРНОМ РЕГИОНЕ

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LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES UNDER LANGUAGE CONTACT IN THE LOWER YENISEY AREA IN THE XXTH CENTURY¹

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The issue of language ideology has gained prominence in recent years with the field of linguistic anthropology, but there has been little agreement over what exactly the concept of language ideologies should mean as a theoretically organizing unit of investigation and terms “language ideology”, “linguistic ideologies”, or “ideologies of language” have been used to describe the same conceptual notion (see discussions on the matter in [Woolard 1998; Kroskrity 2004]). Language, or linguistic ideology may be defined quite generally as “shared beliefs of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” [Rumsey 1990: 346], “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” [Silverstein 1979: 193] or “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” [Irvine 1989: 255]. Linguistic ideologies reflect not only language issues, but also issues of social, ethnic and personal identity: “linguistic ideologies are never just about language, but rather also concern such fundamental social notions as community, nation, and humanity itself” [Woolard 2004: 58]. Language ideologies are not only manifested in linguistic practice itself, but they are also expressed in explicit talk about language, in metalinguistic or metapragmatic discourse [Lanza 2007: 51] (K. Woolard refers to as “implicit metapragmatics” [Woolard 1998: 9]). Under the circumstances of language contact linguistic ideologies can either support small-scale multilingualism (for example, this phenomenon takes place in Waruwi community, see [Singer, Harris 2016]) or “suppress” it causing language shift to the most dominant language (see about “big shift to Tundra Nenets” in the Lower Yenisey area in [Amelina 2019]).

The data for the research on linguistic ideologies in the Lower Yenisey area in the XXth century (and at the beginning of the XXIst century) was collected in Tukhard tundra in the south-western part of Taimyrsky Dolgano-Nenetsky district (Karaul rural settlement) in 2017. Tukhard tundra (TN *Tu-ʔ χarəd°* ‘fire-GEN.SG’ + ‘settlement; house’) is the area on the left bank of the Yenisey river (in the basin of the river Bol’shaya Kheta). 28 detailed sociolinguistic interviews and language biographies of the Tukhard Tundra locals were collected during the expedition and became the data for the research (about the fieldwork methodology see [Khanina 2019]).

The local ethnic groups having language contacts in Tukhard tundra and nearby areas during the XXth century were:

1) Tundra Nenets, speaking the Yenisey (Taimyr) dialect of Tundra Nenets and calling themselves [jörákʰʔ] *jurak°ʔ* _{NOM.PL} (they do not use the term *nyeney° nyenecy°h* [Salminen 1998: 493] lit. ‘true human’ about themselves, only about representatives of the other Tundra Nenets local groups);

2) Tundra Enets (TN *mantoʔ* _{NOM.PL})²;

3) Forest Enets (TN *pʼa wajʔ* _{NOM.PL});

4) Nganasans (TN *tawisʔ* _{NOM.PL})³;

5) Dolgans (TN *tungosʔ* _{NOM.PL})⁴ — Yarotskiy Nikolay’s descendants.

¹ The research is going on with the support of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF), RSF 17-18-01649 “Dynamics of language contacts in the Circumpolar region” (РНФ № 17-18-01649 «Динамика языковых контактов в циркулярном регионе»).

² In Tukhard tundra this Tundra Nenets word can be pronounced as [mándoʔ] / [mándoʔ] / [mántoʔ] / [mántoʔ].

³ In Tukhard tundra this Tundra Nenets word can be pronounced as [təwúsʔ] / [təwísʔ].

There can be highlighted some of the dominant language ideologies functioning in mixed families (Dolgan — Tundra Nenets, Tundra Enets — Dolgan, Tundra Enets — Tundra Nenets, etc.) in the Lower Enisey area in the XXth century.

1) It was necessary to understand and/or speak the language used by people, with whom one had common vitally important activity, determined by his/her gender: a woman should understand and/or speak the language used by other women (for example her husband's sisters) in a nomad reindeer camp while “housekeeping”; a man should understand and/or speak the language used by other men with whom he worked in a reindeer herd (a language for common activity for a female group / for a male group).

[Respondent SGK^h.] “And Yura (my husband who was Tundra Enets), when we were working in Levinsk (settlement Levinskije Peski) among these people — Dolgans, he heard (understood) what they were speaking about. If they were going to catch a reindeer, he knew which reindeer they had wanted to catch”.

2) A process of language learning was tightly linked with a process of “switching” to another material culture, language learning was considered to be an aspect of “cultural adaptation”: for example, learning of the Tundra Nenets language, as well as “switching” to sewing clothes of the Nenets type instead of the Dolgan one and “switching” to the Nenets type of reindeer harness and sledge instead of the Dolgan harness for riding on a reindeer, was perceived as one of the “cultural shift” components).

[Interviewer:] “Did Tatyana Nikolaevna (Dolgan) speak Tundra Nenets well?” [Respondent SGK^h.] “Well. And she sewed “sokui”⁵ — our (Tundra Nenets) clothes⁶. How could she even learn to do it?! (...) She (my mother-in-law Agrafena Nikolaevna who was Dolgan) knew Nenets. She sewed the Nenets “sokui””.

3) It was comfortable for parents to use a “non-dominant” language (for example, Tundra Enets or Dolgan) as “a secret language” (“adults’ language”), so that children speaking more widespread Tundra Nenets can not understand it (about the important role of parental beliefs and attitudes about language and language learning in early bilingual development and family multilingualism see [De Houwer 1999; Lanza 2007: 51—53]).

[Respondent YaRA]: “When it was necessary to say something secret from children, she (my mother, who was Tundra Nenets) could speak Dolgan. Her husband (my father) was Dolgan, Yarotskiy. That's why we knew nothing, they were speaking all secrets in another language (not in Tundra Nenets) — in Enets (Tundra Enets) and Dolgan. (...) And we never knew what bad things had been taking place (...). And our (elder) brothers — they always were good, because they did not tell us anything bad. If there was something bad, they could (speak) in another language only with adults — to discuss something this way”.

4) One's ethnic identity was considered to be inherited from his/her father (“by male line”) even if one's native language was a language of one's mother and he/she even did not know his/her father's language. Even in these cases one's “own language” was considered to mean ‘a language I inherited from my father with my ethnic identity (even if I do not know it at all)’: for example, *‘the “own” language of my children is Tundra Enets, because their father is Tundra Enets, nevertheless they do not know Tundra Enets and speak Tundra Nenets as a native language and I (their mother) am Tundra Nenets’* [respondent SGK^h]. But this linguistic ideology is not a law, it is a stable tendency.

Abbreviations

GEN — genitive case, lit. — literary, NOM — nominative case, PL — plural, SG — singular, TN — Tundra Nenets

⁴ In Tukhard tundra this Tundra Nenets word can be pronounced as [toŋgós?] / [toŋgús?].

⁵ Type of the Tundra Nenets clothing.

⁶ Respondent SGK^h highlights that Tatyana Nikolaevna spoke Tundra Nenets well enough, because she not only spoke Nenets, but also sewed “Nenets-like” (the Nenets type of clothes) very well.

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