

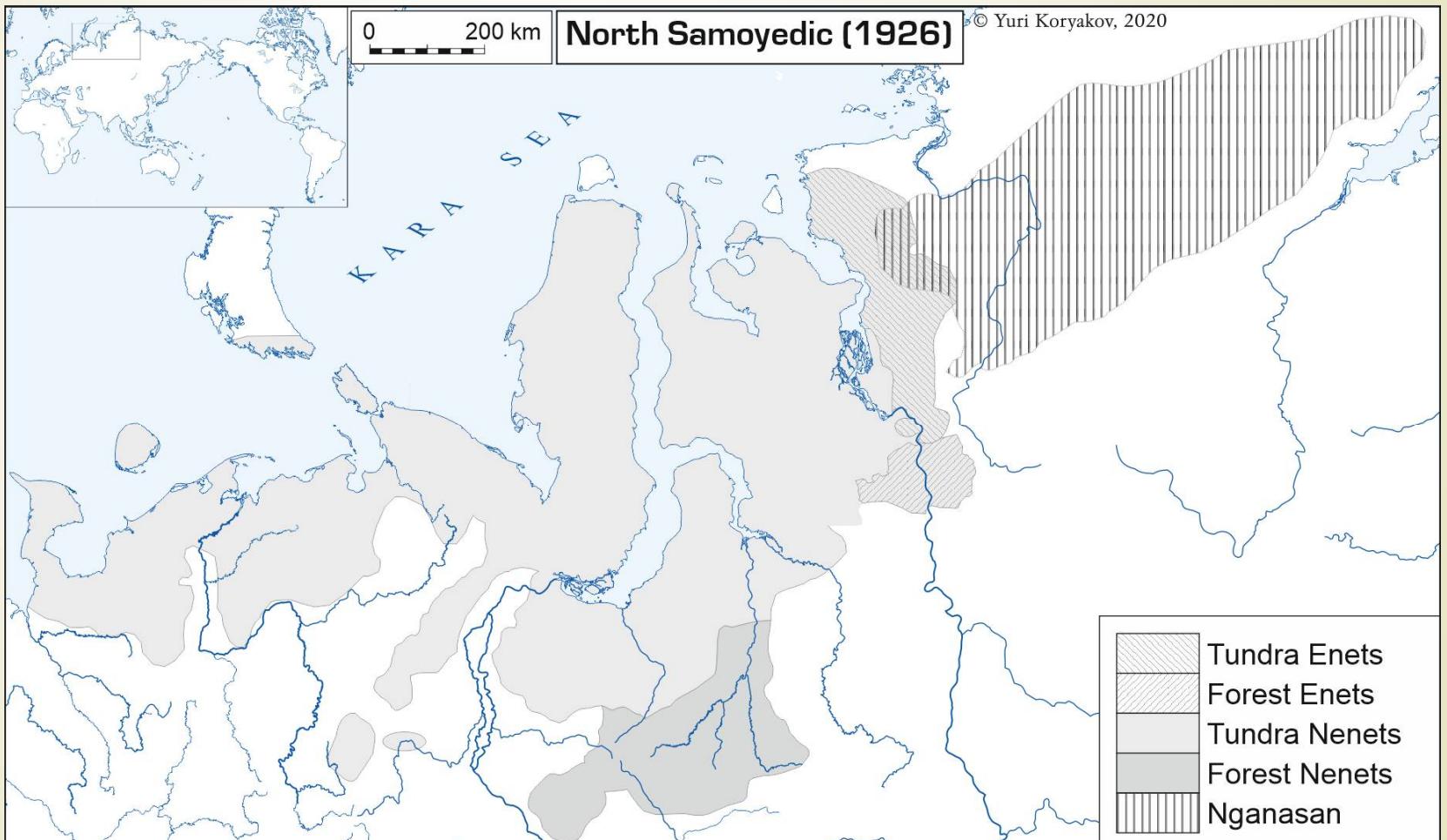


# Divergence and convergence in the history of Northern Samoyedic

Olesya Khanina<sup>1,2</sup> & Valentin Gusev<sup>1</sup>

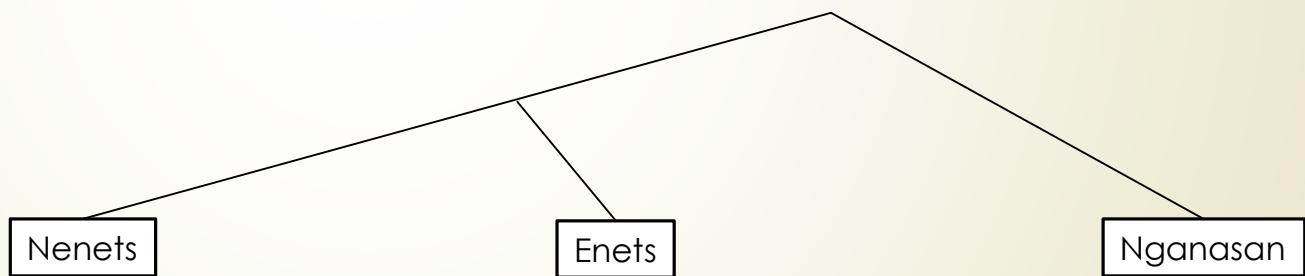
<sup>1</sup>Institute of Linguistics RAS, <sup>2</sup>Finno-Ugrian Society & University of Helsinki

# 1. Introduction



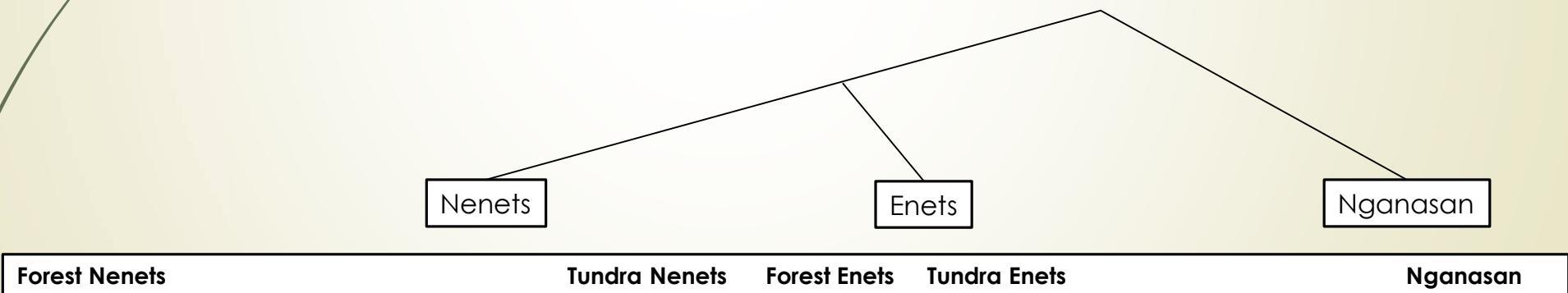
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- ▶ Uralic > Samoyedic > Northern Samoyedic
  - ▶ split off from PSamoyedic 1500-2000 years ago
- ▶ 3 "groups" of languages: Nenets, Enets, Nganasan
  - ▶ divergence based on numerous phonetic, lexical, and grammatical innovations



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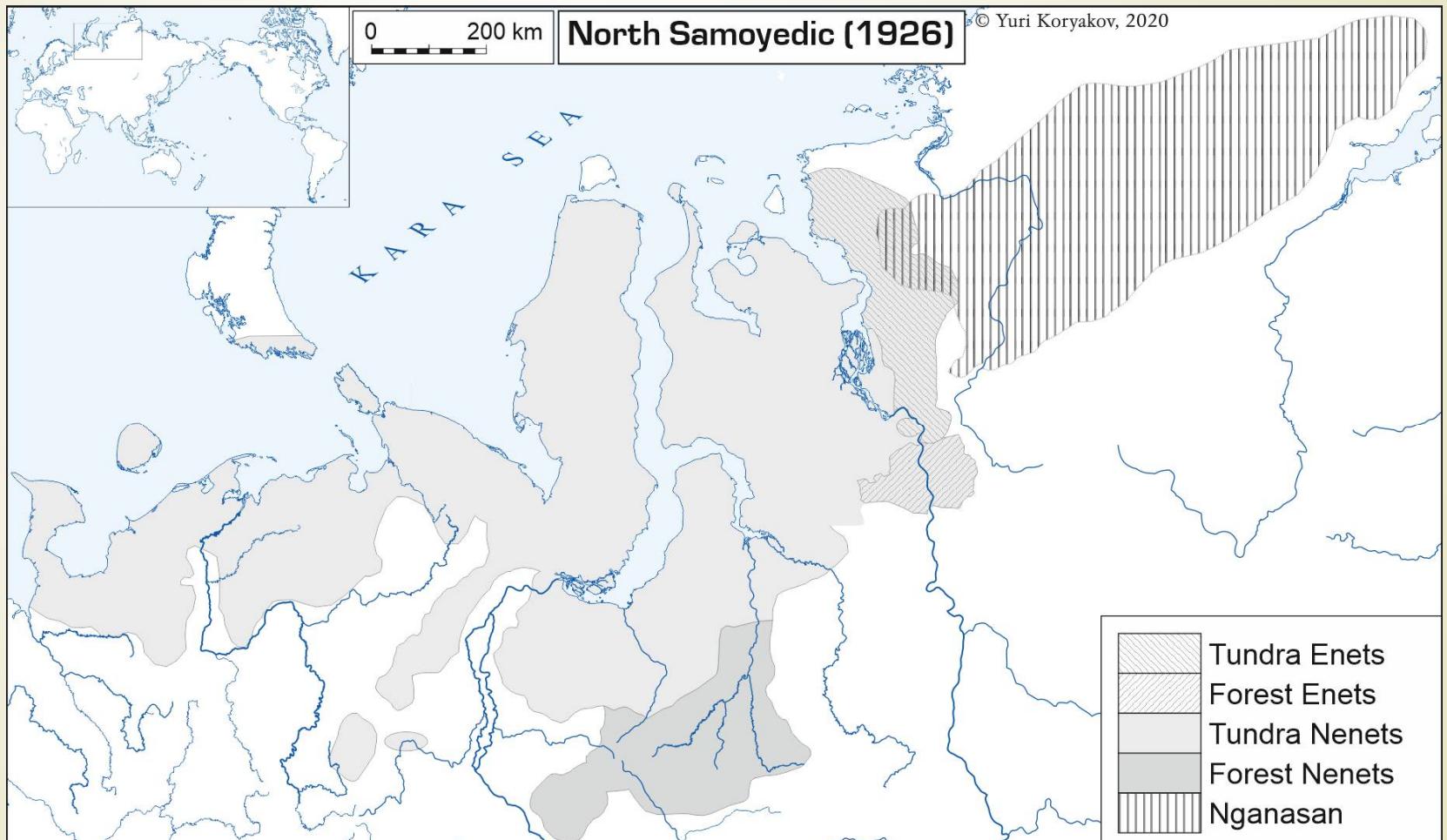




# Enets: divergence - convergence - divergence

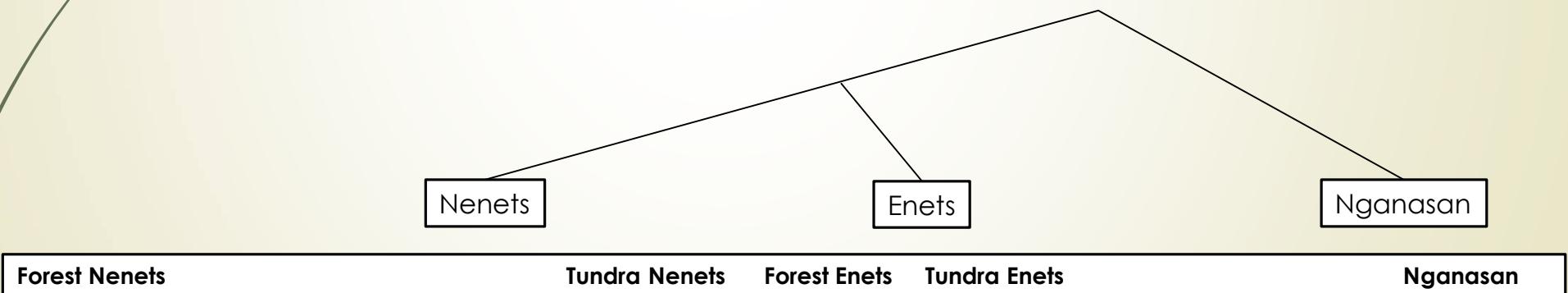
- ▶ Forest Enets and Tundra Enets first split into 2 different communities with 2 different languages
  - ▶ A handful of separate phonetic innovations
  - ▶ A dozen (or two) of separate lexical innovations
  - ▶ A handful of grammatical innovations
- ▶ At least from the beg. of the 19th cent. till the beg. of the 20th cent., FE and TE shared the same area in winter (Sept/Oct – Apr/May)
  - ▶ A complete morphosyntactic convergence: the grammars are now identical
- ▶ From the 1930s on, they did not meet regularly at all
  - ▶ A clear differentiation in the modern communities: 2 reified languages
  - ▶ Recent phonetic changes in FE

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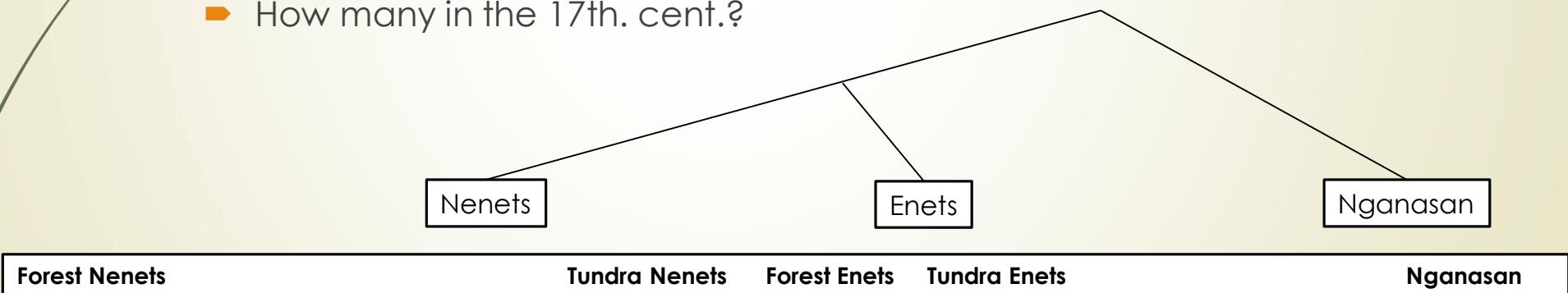
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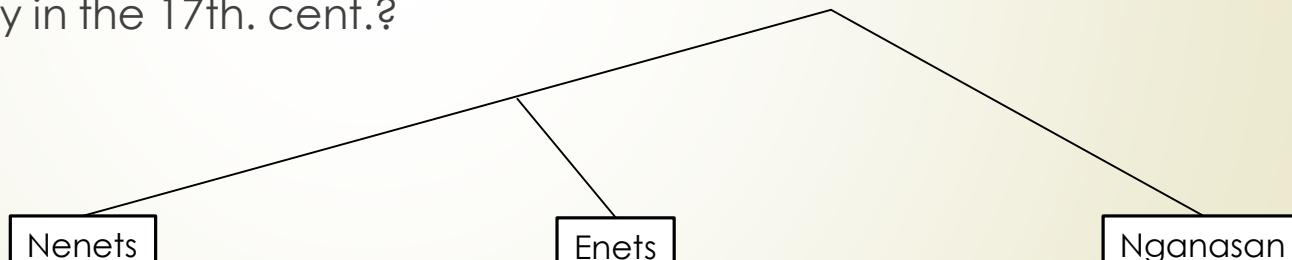
# Lower Yenisei: the epicenter of NS linguistic diversity

- The 17th cent.: more languages than today
  - † Yurak (Yurats)
  - Tidiris?
  - Pyasida Samoyed?
  - Tundra Nenets dialects were less homogeneous than today



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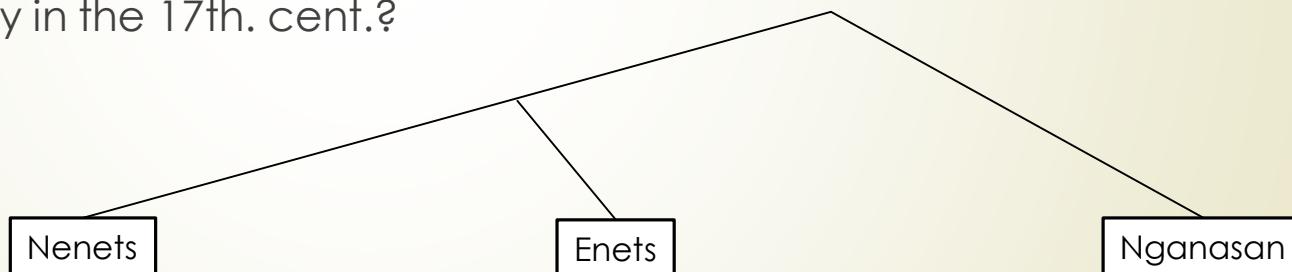
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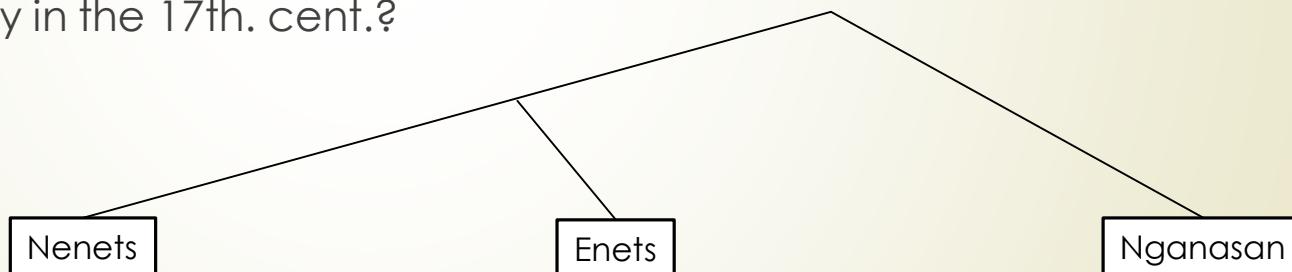
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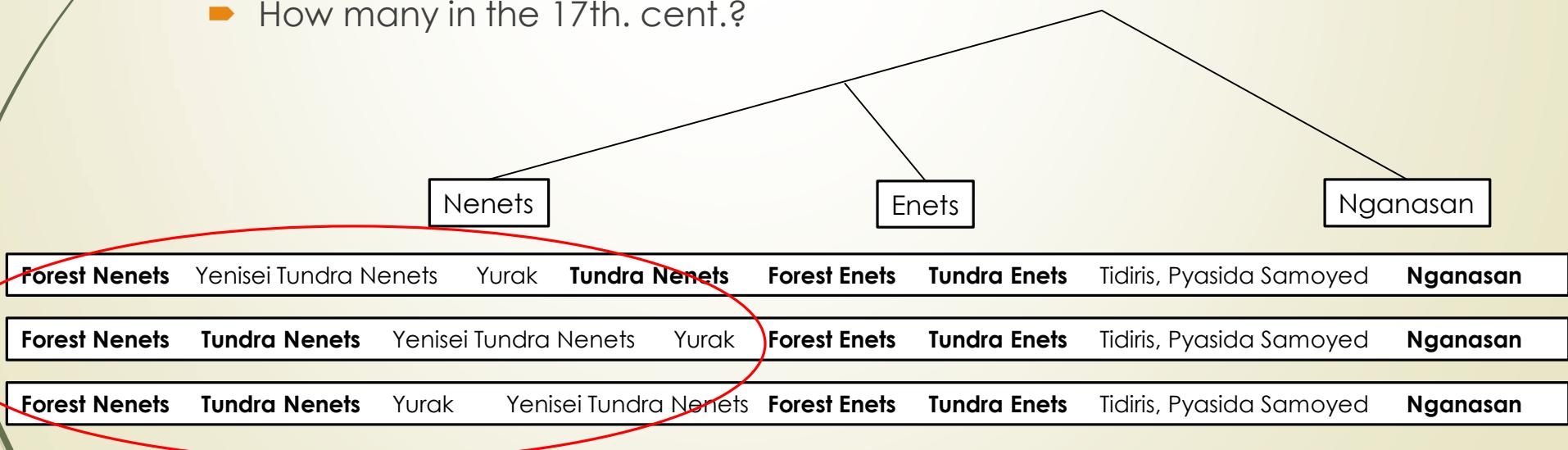
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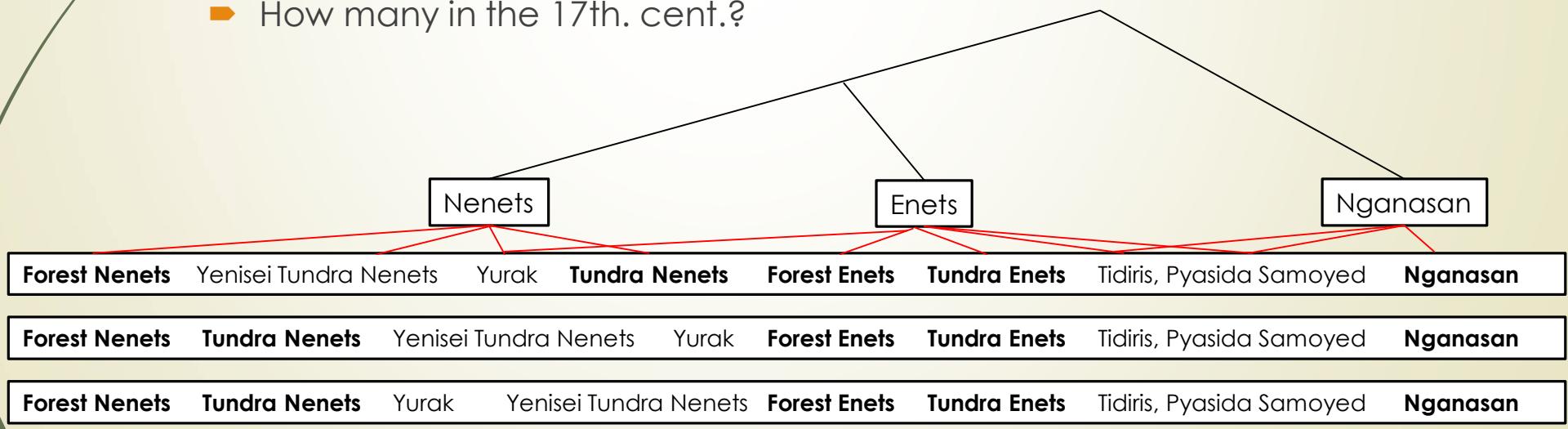
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## 2. Sociolinguistic history

Mostly flat land, tundra or low-lying land

Nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life; use of reindeer (and dogs) for transport

Fishing, hunting, (large) herding, agriculture, reindeer herding

Climatic conditions: long, dark winters (longer after Sept-May), and so individuals rarely lived autonomously; relied on families, neighbors

Physical distance between individuals was not usually a weak correlate of the social distance between them

networks were supported rather by marriages and regular visits than by direct geographic proximity

exogamic clans,

Intermarriages between speakers of neighbouring NS languages

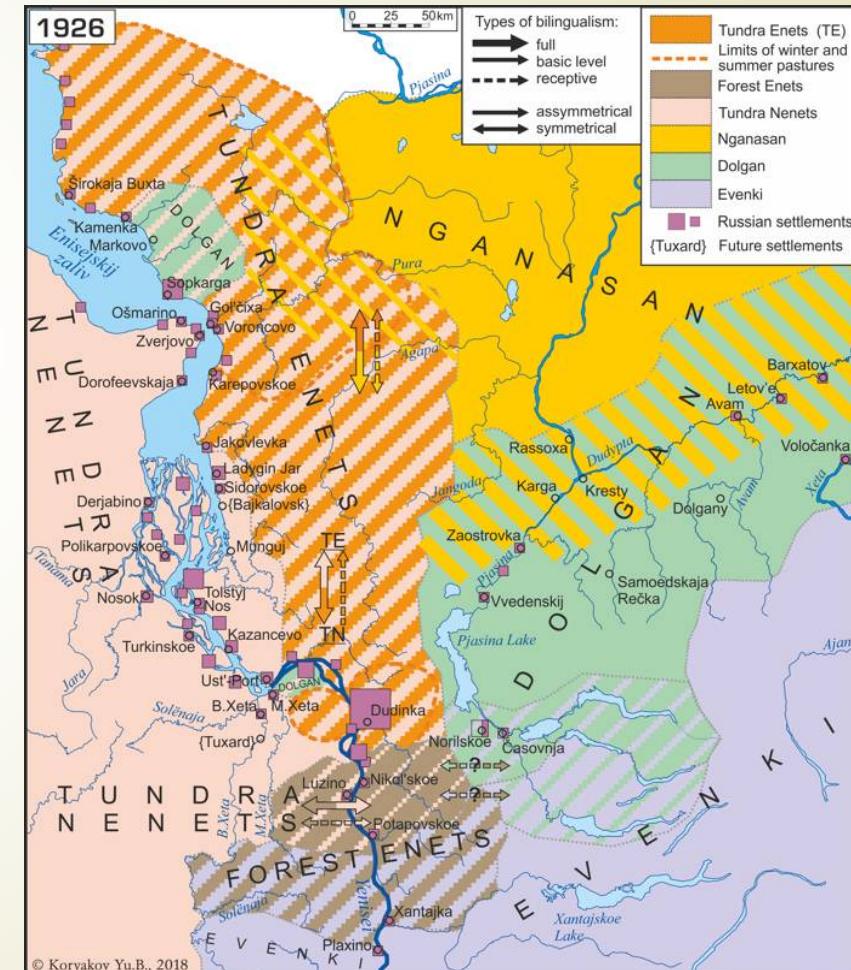
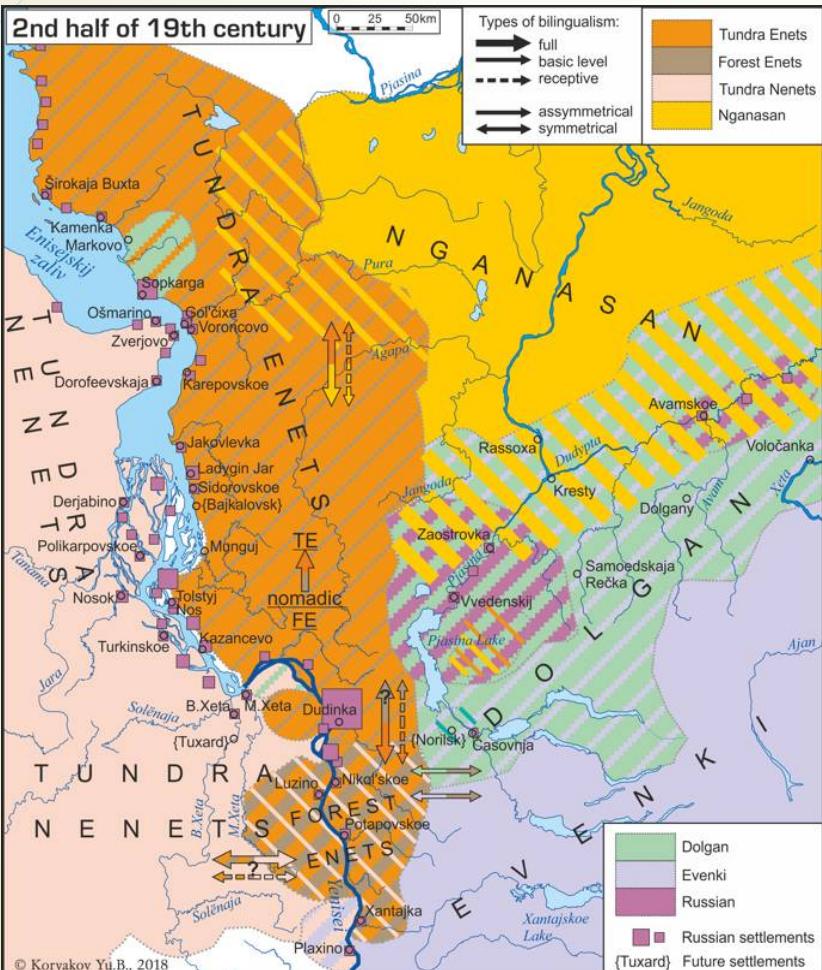


## 2. Sociolinguistic history

- ▶ Despite huge distances, nomadic Northern Samoyedic speakers have always been **in contact** with each other.
- ▶ The last 150 years: **mutual bilingualism** for all cases of neighborhood of different NS languages
  - ▶ at least receptive/passive, often each party speaking its own language
    - ▶ The difference between NS languages is similar to the difference within Germanic:
      - ▶ no immediate mutual understanding between the 3 'groups' (Enets, Nenets, Nganasan),
      - ▶ phoneme recalculation in case of borrowings.
    - ▶ usually without any socio-economic dominance of one group over the other.
  - ▶ 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> cent.: numerous cases of **bilateral language shifts** by smaller groups of people (selected clans).
  - ▶ **Egalitarian language ideologies** reconstructed for the Lower Yenisei of the 1930s:
    - ▶ all NS languages had equal social weight,
    - ▶ the language of the family was usually predicted from the language of the majority, not from the patrilects of the parents,
    - ▶ low weight of languages in social identities (cf. Sutton 1978, Merlan 1981, Singer 2018).

(Khanina & Koryakov 2018), (Khanina 2021)

# Multilingualism at the Lower Yenisei



## 2. Sociolinguistic history

- ▶ Our working hypothesis is that similar sociolinguistic setting was typical for NS in the more remote past
  - ▶ Evans (2017, 2018): prehistoric linguistic past of small-scale indigenous communities can be reached via sociolinguistic studies of their modern communities and linguistic studies of their languages
  - ▶ i.e. the divergence of NS languages from the common ancestor has been accompanied
    - ▶ by bilingualism in border areas,
    - ▶ by occasional language shifts.
- ▶ Both resulted in secondary linguistic convergence of these related languages.



### 3. Messing up the dialect chain

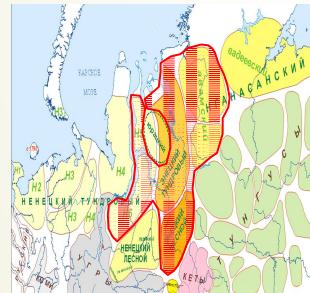
- ▶ Migrations of some groups
  - ▶ Originally northbound, recently also eastbound
    - ▶ Development of reindeer herding (Khanina & Gusev, forth.),
    - ▶ Migrations of other ethnic groups (e.g. Souther Samoyeds fleeing from Russian colonization)
    - ▶ Specifics of tribute collection (furs)
    - ▶ Climate change
    - ▶ ?...
  - ▶ Disappearance of some languages (e.g. Yurak, Tidiris/Pjasida Samoyed)
  - ▶ These led to more visible distinctions between the remaining 5 languages
    - ▶ a more complicated spatial distribution of shared structures and lexicon

### 3. Messing up the dialect chain

- Examples of broken isoglosses on modern map of NS languages

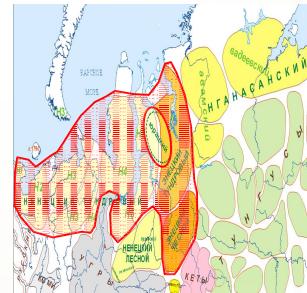
Спирантизация  $d > \delta$  между гласными

нен<sup>Т</sup> (таймырский диалект), энЛ, энТ, нган



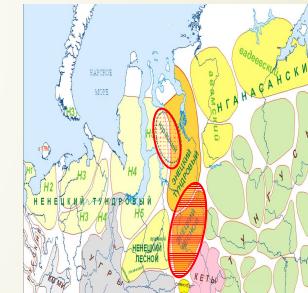
Переход  $N > ?$  в ауслауте

нен<sup>Т</sup>, энЛ, энТ



Переход  $Ns > Ts$

ненО, энЛ



(Gusev 2017)

## 4. Legacy linguistic data

- ▶ There are some historic records:
  - ▶ the oldest NS wordlists collected by Gerhard Friedrich Müller in 1733-1743, WiP
    - ▶ Beside the Yurak wordlist published by Helimski (1976) and some data reproduced (with errors and without reference) in Julius von Klaproth's *Asia polyglotta* (1823), the lists are yet unpublished
  - ▶ M.A.Castrén's published (1854, 1855) and unpublished (1846) works, WiP
- ▶ The more to the past we go, the more variation we see:
  - ▶ more language varieties (e.g. Yurak, Yenisei Tundra Nenets),
  - ▶ more variation in individual languages
- ▶ Even 170-280 years ago, the Northern Samoyedic languages were less 'separate/distinct' than today.



## 5. Approach the study of the contact: our methodology

- ▶ Searching for points of divergence between the closest languages:
  - ▶ Forest Enets vs. Tundra Enets,
  - ▶ Forest Nenets vs. Tundra Nenets,
  - ▶ within dialects of Tundra Nenets.
- ▶ Checking the values of the diverging features in the other Northern Samoyedic languages.
- ▶ We are currently compiling a pool of such diverging features = isoglosses which break languages **not** along the standard groupings.
  - ▶ Some of them are given in this talk as examples, but we have much more.

## 5. Approach the study of the contact: examples

- ▶ Numerous centers of wave-like innovations, e.g.
  - ▶ (1) Clear innovation in the south: Past Interrogative
  - ▶ (2) Clear innovation in the center: Personal pronouns
  - ▶ (3) Possible innovation in the north (under the contact influence): Numerals 11-19
  - ▶ (4) Unclear scenario, south vs. north: Demonstrative/Interrogative pronouns
  - ▶ (5) Unclear scenario, east vs. west: Auditive
- ▶ And what about common retentions?

Shall structures of NS languages be seen as sets of features some of which can receive support from contact languages and prosper, while others can shrink for a while, and then revive upon strengthening of contacts with languages which also have them?

- ▶ legacy data from 18<sup>th</sup>– 19<sup>th</sup> cent. are crucial for this hypothesis! - WiP

# Example 1: clear innovation in the south

## Past and Past interrogative

- ▶ Forest Enets & Nenets:
  - ▶ a new past tense formed with a postfix,
  - ▶ the old (common Uralic) past in *\*-så* used in the interrogative contexts as a dedicated Past Interrogative.
- ▶ Nganasan:
  - ▶ the old Past in *\*-så* is used as Past,
  - ▶ Past Interrogative formed with another suffix -hu (< *\*-på*, no clear etymology)
- ▶ Tundra Enets:
  - ▶ the new past tense formed with a postfix,
  - ▶ Past Interrogative formed with the suffix -ba (< *\*-på*, no clear etymology),
  - ▶ No affix from *\*-så*.

	FN	TN	FE	TE	Ngan
Past	new	new	new	new	old
Past Interr	new	new	new	old	old

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Shading  
indicates  
innovation

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# Example 2: clear innovation in the center

## Personal pronouns and emphatic suffixes

- ▶ All NS languages have personal pronouns for 3 numbers (sg, du, pl):
  - ▶ Nganasan: SG-DU-PL are suppletive (*mənə* 'I', *mii* 'we two', *miŋ* 'we').
  - ▶ Nenets & Enets:
    - ▶ SG as a base (ex. TE, FE *mod'i* 'I'), the bases are not always cognate
    - ▶ possessive suffixes are added to it for DU and PL (TE, FE *mod'i-n'i?* 'we two', *mod'i-na?* 'we').
- ▶ All NS languages can have emphatic morphology on personal pronouns ('only', 'even'..):
  - ▶ STEM + EMPH + POSS
  - ▶ Forest Nenets, Tundra Enets & Nganasan: short pronominal stems  
(ex. TE *mo-l'io-no* 'only me', *mo-l'io-n'i?* 'only we two', *mo-l'io-na?* 'only we').
  - ▶ Tundra Nenets & Forest Enes: full pronominal stems (ex. FE *mod'i-ruu-no* 'only me')

	FN	TN	FE	TE	Ngan
Bare pronouns	new	new	new	new	old
Pronouns with emphatic morphology	old	new	new	old	old

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Shading indicates innovation

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Bare pronouns	new	new	new	new	old
Pronouns with emphatic morphology	old	new	new	old	old

# Example 3: possible innovation in the north

## Numerals from 11 to 19.

- ▶ Eastern Tundra Nenets (Yenisei, Gyda) & Yurak & Tundra Enets & Nganasan:
  - ▶ simple juxtaposition of words for 10 and 1/2/3/4/... (ex. TE *biu?jize* 'ten two' = '12')
  - ▶ in Eastern TN this co-exists with a more complicated pattern from Standard TN
  - ▶ The same in Kamas and Mator (South Samoyedic), and also in Tungusic and Turkic.
- ▶ Forest Enets & Nenets:
  - ▶ a more complicated pattern (ex. FE *biu-koz jize bozade* 'ten-ABL.SG two surplus')
  - ▶ in Forest Nenets & Western Tundra Nenets (BZ=standard) vs. Central Tundra Nenets (Yamal) other words can be used, but no juxtaposition.
  - ▶ The same in Selkup (South Samoyedic), and other Uralic languages.

	FN	Western TN (=standard)	Yamal TN	Gyda TN	Yenisei TN	FE	Yurak	TE	Ngan
11-19 complex	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
11-19 simple	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+

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11-19 complex	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
11-19 simple	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+

Shading  
indicates  
innovation

# Example 4: unclear scenario, south vs. north

## Demostrative/interrogative pronouns

- Tundra Enets & Nganasan:
  - a pronominal series with a common suffix *\*-rəjä* (not attested elsewhere):  
TE *eloe* 'such, this', *troe* 'such, that', *kuroe* 'which, what',  
Ngan *əmləd'i*, *tərəd'i*, *kurəd'i*.
- Forest Enets & Nenets:
  - the same series, but with a different suffix *\*-rsä*:  
FE *else*, *torse*, *kurse*,  
TN *tärća*, FN *täťśa* (in Nenets, only one member of this series has left).
- These two variants may be ultimately related.

	FN	TN	FE	TE	Ngan
Dem. pron.	<i>*-rsä</i>	<i>*-rsä</i>	<i>*-rsä</i>	<i>*-rəjä</i>	<i>*-rəjä</i>

# Example 5: unclear scenario, east vs. west

## Auditive

- ▶ Verbal morpheme marking the auditive source of information
- ▶ 2 different markers of auditive: \*-mano and \*-mono:
  - ▶ their mutual relationship is not clear
- ▶ Tundra Nenets dialects: both markers, with different frequency distribution:
  - ▶ almost exclusively -manon in the west (BZ, Standard TN),
  - ▶ both actively used in the center (Yamal),
  - ▶ almost exclusively -monon in the east (Yenisei)
- ▶ Forest Nenets, Enets, Nganasan: \*-mono (FN -monon, FE -munu, TE -mono, Ng -munu(j))

	TN west	TN center	TN east	FN	FE	TE	Ngan
*-mano	+	+	(+)	-	-	-	-
*-mono	(+)	+	+	+	+	+	+

## 6. Conclusion

- ▶ Our aim was to present you the Northern Samoyedic family so that you know that this is also a case of contact of closely related languages.
  - ▶ First, divergence: NS split off into 3 groups - Nenets, Enets, Nganasan
  - ▶ Later, convergence: further innovations spread disregarding the original split
  - ▶ Within the Enets group, another case of divergence – convergence - divergence
- ▶ Besides, we want to suggest that a potentially fruitful approach to the phenomenon itself lies in
  - ▶ Interdisciplinarity (beside historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnohistory, linguistic geography, etc.: the more extralinguistic evidence we have, the better we can read the linguistic cues),
  - ▶ A conceptual move from the reified languages of today to sociolinguistic continuity of a dialect continuum in the past (for this, typological background referring to modern dialect continua is particularly beneficial).