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On the “Yukte” Pilot Project “Evenki Language at School: Teaching Techniques, Information Technologies and Experience Exchange”

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The present article considers contemporary tendencies of developing the languages of small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North. The author arrives at the conclusion on the necessity of learning two and more languages for members of ethnocultural groups of small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North. The author describes the experiment of saving and popularizing of Even language in Sakha Republic (Yakutia). There are some examples of successful learning of the native language by the members of Even ethnocultural group.

Keywords: Even language, small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North, Sakha Republic (Yakutia), “Yukte” project.

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At the present time the modern language situation in the world bears negative character, as the traditional communication functions of the languages spoken by indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North are being lost under the conditions of multilingualism. At the same time, the majority of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North have a good command of Sakha and Russian languages along with their native one. The command of three–four languages: native, Sakha, Russian and a foreign one are the base for increasing the mobility of people and the political stability of the society. Such language

situation requires a system of well-balanced conscious bilingualism and multilingualism. Teaching native language at schools is the most crucial factor of its preservation and development under the conditions of multilingualism.

New federative initiatives to unify the education system at first caused considerable social and political tension. Great anxiety was expressed in the republics of the Russian Federation where the majority of schools providing education in a non-Russian language are located. The analysis of the present situation in the education system carried out by the Institute of Ethnology and

Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Science (IEA RAS) has shown, that in the past every school could compose the curriculum only within the limits of several per cent of the academic time, while the rest of it was controlled by the republican bodies of education management. The new approach requires the whole curriculum to be unified according to the federation standard. This way the state “takes up the reigns” of the education system.

However, the federal legislation provides schools with the opportunity to choose a certain education curriculum within the framework of the standard. This independence helps the school act in a more flexible way under the changing conditions. Nevertheless, the freedom of curriculum choice can turn out both as an advantage and as a source of various problems. The curriculum choice is a great load of responsibility that falls on the school teachers. As a result, modern school needs a system of social orientation methods. To solve the problems, schools need to carry out their “marketing” research on their own.

The year 2010 was the beginning of the pilot project “Yukte” in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). The work under the project is to last for 5 years and is aimed at organizing the help in analysing the current situation, in conducting some career guidance and social adaptation work among the population of the compact Evenki settlements, in evaluating the modern educational and other needs of the population including the need for studying their native language.

The project coordinators are the Ministry of Education of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Department of the Peoples’ Affairs and Federative Relations (DPAFR), Institute of Humanitarian Researches and Problems of the Small-Numbered Peoples of the North of the Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Science (IHRPSPN SB RAS). The main executives of the project are: IHRPSPN SB RAS, DPAFR in the

SR (Yakutia). The co-executives are: the Ethnic Schools’ Institute; the administrations of ulus and agricultural communities; Ulus Departments of Education; Institute for Advanced Training for Education Officers. The Academic Advisor of the project is Andreeva T.E., the Deputy Director for Science of the IHRPSPN SB RAS, Candidate of Science.

The main objective of the present project is to organise and run a workshop on the following topic: “Evenki language at school: teaching techniques, information technologies and experience exchange”, in the places of compact Evenki settlements.

For the project, the following tasks were listed: to make a survey among teachers and parents devoted to teaching ethnocultural subjects at school; to introduce some new methods of native language teaching, to convey the traditional knowledge to pre-school educational institutions, nomadic and secondary schools, to introduce the information technologies used in native language teaching; to provide career guidance and psychological consultations on the issues of choosing and changing profession, on the issues of social and professional adaptation of the youth; to organize interdepartmental interaction, to provide order and continuity in the educational and teaching work.

The project is aimed at schools, Evenki language teachers, pre-school educational institutions’ teachers, in order to conduct methodological consultations and help the teachers of schools and pre-school educational institutions provide career guidance and psychological consultation on the issues of choosing and changing profession, on the problems of social and professional adaptation of the youth and the unemployed citizens registered at employment centres. Under the present project, it is planned to run workshops in the compact settlements of Evenki in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), such

as Khatystyr village in Belletsky agricultural community of Aldanskiy ulus; Kutana village in Belletsky agricultural community of Aldanskiy ulus; Ugoian village in Belletsky agricultural community of Aldanskiy ulus; Iengra village in Iengrinsky agricultural community of Neryungrinsky municipal district; Olenek village of Oleneksky agricultural community of Oleneksky ulus; Neryungri city, “Arctica” gymnasium school; Ust’-Maysky ulus.

The forms and methods of the work include the following: survey of the workshop participants, students and their parents; organization of lectures on the native language teaching methods, pedagogy and psychology, information technologies involved; consultation on the issues of choosing and changing profession, provision of psychological support, conduction of workshops and class analysis by Evenki language teachers. The pilot project is planned to be actualized step by step within five years. Every year information and methodological materials for Evenki teacher training will be issued, interim evaluation of Evenki language teaching quality and of teaching work will be done.

The pilot project is financed from the grant provided by the DPAFR in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). The first stage of the project has been successfully complete in G.M. Vasilevich Secondary School in Zolotinskoe.

The second stage of “Yukte” special project on the language education of Evenki, run by the DPAFR in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), headed by Andreeva Tamara Egorovna, Candidate of Science, Deputy Director for Science of the IHRPSN SB RAS, united the Evenki language teachers and pre-school teachers from the agricultural communities of Aldansky municipal district, from Ugoian, Kutana, Khatystyr villages, Iengra village of Neryungrinsky municipal district, “Arctica” secondary school in Neryungri city, Ezhantsy village of Ust’-Mansky municipal

district, Tyanya village of Olekminskiy municipal district, members of the Science Schools and Research Institutes, IHRPSN SB RAS, DPAFR in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) from 16 to 19 of March, 2011, in Khatystyr of Aldansky municipal district.

Under the project, some educational workshops on the federal educational standards, information technologies, teaching at nomadic schools, pre-school teaching and elementary teaching for teachers and the community were run.

One of the most interesting trends of the project work is conducting workshops on native language teaching. The participant teachers showed brilliant samples of classes, different in their types and forms, involving various creative techniques and intensive teaching methods along with the new information technologies. After the class analysis the teachers exchanged their opinions on the performed work.

At the scientific and practical conference “Odukipty” held among students, the reports of 15 students were heard and discussed.

The soloists of “Gulun” ensemble carried out a series of workshops for the creative groups of secondary schools. A performance “Soling Develche”, set in Evenki language, made under the project of the theatre studio of the secondary school No 20 in Khatystyr village of Aldansky municipal district, was highly appreciated by the experts. Ethnical music and dance ensembles of the regional schools demonstrated a very high level of skill and art. Their high-quality costumes were especially remarkable.

The experts of the Aldansky municipal district Employment centre carried out a career guidance campaign called “Future is in your hands” for 30 school graduates in order to reveal the intellectual and creative potential of the students, to provide support in the formation and development of the key competences and

professional qualities of a personality. The career guidance campaign was headed by the Minister of Science and Professional Education Yu.S. Kupriyanov along with the directors of general secondary educational institutions and vocational schools of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

The workshop participants took part in “Nelkini Emeren”, “Bakaldyn” celebrations, and visited the exhibition of arts and crafts.

A great interest of the workshop participants and Khatystyr dwellers was drawn to the “Samnintu” (teacher-student) competition for Evenki language teachers.

As a conclusion of the II stage of “Yukte” project, the resolution determining the main objectives and tasks of work on solving the problems of native language teaching under the conditions of a policultural medium was issued. All the participants were awarded certificates of the Institute for Advanced Training for Education

Officers, Science Schools’ Institute, IHRPSPN SB RAS, DPAFR in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

The participants of the events held within the framework of the project expressed their gratitude for the inspiration with the energy of creation to the administration of Secondary School No.20 of Khatystyr village in Aldansky municipal district and personally to its principal Nikitina Anna Gavrilyevna, her deputy Marfusulova Maya Dmitrievna and the whole staff for the perfect management of the project.

We do hope that we will be able to provide methodological and pedagogical consultations on the native language teaching, to promote the career guidance service for the population by organizing distance consultation on the career guidance and social adaptation issues in the places of the small-numbered Northern peoples’ settlements, and also to build stable interaction between schools, families and pre-school educational institutions.

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**О пилотном проекте «Юктэ»
«Эвенкийский язык в школе: методика обучения,
информационные технологии и обмен опытом»**

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Статья рассматривает современные тенденции развития языков коренных малочисленных народов Севера. Автор приходит к выводу о необходимости освоения двух и более языков для представителей этнокультурных групп коренных малочисленных народов Севера, описывает эксперимент по сохранению и распространению эвенкийского языка в Республике Саха (Якутия). Приводятся примеры успешного освоения родного языка представителями эвенкийской этнокультурной группы.

Ключевые слова: эвенкийский язык, коренные малочисленные народы Севера, Республика Саха (Якутия), проект «Юктэ».

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