

УДК 811.512.212'28 (075.8)

Dialects of Even Language: Research Status and Classification

Sardana I. Sharina*

*M.K. Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk
58 Belinskiy Str., Yakutsk, 677980 Russia*

Received 10.01.2013, received in revised form 25.02.2013, accepted 29.04.2013

The article is dedicated to researching dialects of Even language and their classification. The most relevant researches of Even language are considered. The practical goal is to save rare languages of small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East.

Keywords: Even language, small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East, dialects.

The work was fulfilled within the framework of the research financed by the Krasnoyarsk Regional Foundation of Research and Technology Development Support and in accordance with the course schedule of Siberian Federal University as assigned by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

One of the top-priority lines of humane researches is studying languages on the brink of extinction, spoken by a small number of native people from the North, recording and describing the cultural and dialect variety. To perform this task for Even language the attention should be concentrated on the least developed aspects, such as description of dialects and subdialects, their structure and classifications. Due to the previous researches, nowadays we possess the information which had been gathered by various researchers within several centuries.

For the first time Armansky dialect of Even language was described long time ago, in 1940s, by I.I. Lindenau. "Comparative dictionary of all languages and dialects" (1787-1789) by P.S.Pallas presents Ol'sky and Okhotsky dialects

of Even language. The files from I. Billings expedition (1795) contain some samples of the Srednekolymsky Evens' speech.

More advanced researches began in the mid-XIX century. The information gathered by G. Maydell and Yu. Stubendorf in 1860-1870 along with that published by A. Shifner, contains a short description of the Okhotsky and Anadyrsky Evens. In the year 1895 V.G. Bogoraz gathered some materials from the Evens who lived in the area of the Omolon river basin.

Later, throughout the twentieth century, some systematic researches of many Even dialects and subdialects were made. The researches carried out in the late '20s and early '30s all around the country were a part of the great culture construction campaign run in the North.

Many famous researchers worked with Even dialects, for example, V.I. Tsintsius, V.I. Levin, K.A. Novikova, L.V. Sobolevsky, L.D. Rishes. In the following years a big number of dialectological works was made by V.D. Lebedev, V.A. Robbek, Kh.I. Dutkin, A.A. Burykin, A.A. Danilova, V.A. Petrova, V.S. Ermolaeva, R.P. Kuz'mina.

Thanks to the efforts of these scientists, some expeditions in various areas of the Evens' settlement were made. The major part of the expedition results is presented in a series of well-known releases including monographs published in Leningrad within the next several decades; "Studies of the Even (Lamut) language grammar" by V.I. Tsintsius published in the 1947 was the first and the most prominent one. The work conveys the specifics of Eastern Even language, Ol'sky subdialect, which formed the base for literary Even language and partially for Kamchatsky subdialect. Till now the work has not lost its value. A detailed description of the Ol'sky subdialect grammar we can find in the research by K.A. Novikova "Study of the Even language dialects" in two parts.

A significant contribution to Even dialectology was introduced by Yakut scientists. The detailed phonetic, morphologic, lexical, and syntactic peculiarities of Even dialects and subdialects were described by V.D. Lebedev in his monographs "Language of the Yakut Evens" (1978), "Okhotsky dialect of Even language" (1982). The first one is dedicated to the language of Dogdo-Chebogalakhsky and Ulakhan-Chistaysky agricultural communities in Momsky District of Yakutia. V. Lebedev claims that Ulakhan-Chistaysky subdialect belongs to Kolymsky subdialects of Eastern dialect. The researcher detects the distinctive features of Dogdo-Chebogalakhsky and Ulakhan-Chistaysky subdialects on all the levels of language in respect with literary Even. The author supposes that Ulakhan-Chistaysky subdialect

experienced the influence of the nearby Eastern subdialects (sibilance, particulate retention of the "u"), and that some specifics of the Dogdo-Chebogalakhsky subdialect (absolute spirancy, metatized possessive forms of the 2nd and 3rd person plural –*һыһһ*–*һһһһ*, –*тыһһ* ~ *тһһһ*) are determined mostly by the territorial closeness to Western dialect. In the morphological aspect, both subdialects are characterized by the only form of the personal pronoun in the 1st person plural form: *мыт* "we". In both dialects the dependent form of the possessive pronouns in 1st and 2nd person is absent. In both dialects postposition construction are used instead of aditive-locative case and aditive-prosecutive cases. Lexical differences between the subdialects are insignificant; some of them are found, for example, in the names of animals. V.D. Lebedev introduced some unique linguistic materials from Dogdo-Chebogalakhsky and Ulakhan-Chistaysky subdialects into the researches. The characteristic of the phonemes and the phonetic system was based on the experimental data provided by X-ray pictures, kymographs of the vowel duration.

The second work by V.D. Lebedev is aimed at the studies of Okhotsky dialect spoken along the coast of the Okhotsk Sea from the Ulya river in the South-West to Inya river in the North-East, and deep in taiga to the North from the Ketanda (Yudoma) river, in the total area of 50 thousand square kilometres. The present work outlines the linguistic features typical for all the three groups of the Okhotsk Evens, i.e. to Okhotsky dialect as a whole. V.D. Lebedev found out that the materials gathered for the language of the Okhotsk Evens can be used to clarify the existing classification of Even dialects, to mark the speech of the Okhotsk Evens as a special Eastern dialect among the others, as it still preserves the old features of its subdivision into smaller units, such as subdialects and local idioms, which were originally spoken by separate Even tribes.

The monograph “Language of the Berezovka Evens” (1989) by V.A. Robbek is dedicated to the research of morphological, syntactical and lexical peculiarities of the language spoken by the Evens in Berezovka village, Srednekolymsky District. The work presents wide comparative material on some other subdialects, such as Ol’sky, Okhotsky and the subdialect of the Yakutia Evens. The researcher outlines the distinctive features of Berezovsky subdialect in comparison with other subdialects on various levels of language. The morphological study deserves special mentioning. Unlike other dialectological works that describe only the distinctive features of the studied subdialect, it also clarifies the parts of speech classification issue, especially that concerning the verb category.

The work by Kh.I. Dutkin “Allaikhovsky subdialect of the Yakutia Evens” (1995) is dedicated to the phonetic, morphologic and lexical peculiarities of Allaikhovsky subdialect. Within Allaikhovsky subdialect, the author outlines 2 more subidioms (classified into 5 *geni*). The work by Kh.I. Dutkin “Tundra dialect of Western Even language” presents the results of the continuous research of the idioms spoken by the Evens in Ust-Yansky, Allaikhovsky and Nizhnekolymsky Districts, which enabled the author to summarize the research results and classify tundra and mountain-taiga dialects of Western Even language. The author intentionally draws your attention to the significance of this dialect zone in the linguistic and geographic aspect research, as in these subdialects various phenomena are found.

R.P. Kuzmina in her research “The language of the Lamunkhinsky Evens” (2010) revealed the peculiarities typical for Lamunkhinsky subdialect of Even language.

The peculiarities of some subdialects were described in the published works by A.A. Burykin, A.A. Danilova, V.A. Petrova, V.S. Ermolaeva.

Even though with the effort of the researchers from Saint Petersburg and Yakutia a lot of interesting information on the dialects and subdialects of Even language has been collected and published, some of the dialects and subdialects have not been highlighted in the existing published works, and many of them still lack a systematic description. The difficulty of describing the subdialects of the Yakut Evens is explained by the great number of variations on all the language levels due to the bi- or multilingualism of their speakers or the influence of Yakut language. For this reason, the attention of the researchers is drawn to the peculiarities of dialects’ and subdialects’ interaction in the borderline zones between the languages.

The problem of classification of Even dialects and subdialects still remains topical. At the present time, several approaches to the Even dialects’ classification are known.

The diversity on the phonetic, lexical and grammatic features allowed V.I. Tsintsius outline 11 dialects and subdialects in her work “Studies of Even (Lamut) language grammar”. According to the classification, seven of the subdialects belong to Eastern Even language: Kolymsko-Omolonsky, Ol’sky, Kamchatsky, Okhotsky, Verkhnekolymsky, Indigirsky, Tomponsky. Three of the subdialects belong to Western Even language: Sarkyryrsky (or Sakkyryrsky), Lamunkhinsky and Yukagirsky; Armansky dialect is pointed out separately (Tsintsius 1947).

On the map of Even dialects compiled by K.A. Novikova, 12 dialects and subdialects are marked: Eastern Even language: Ol’sky, Okhotsky, Penzhinsky, Bystrinsky, Anadyrsky, Kolymsko-Omolonsky; Middle Even language: Tomponsky, Minsky, Allaikhovsky subdialects; Western Even language: Lamunkhinsky and Tyugesirsky subdialects; Armansky dialect (Novikova 1960).

In the “Comparative dictionary of Tungusic languages” there are 15 Even dialects and subdialects: Eastern Even language: Anadyrsky, Bystrinsky, Kolymsko-Omolonsky, Ol’sky, Okhotsky, Penzhinsky, Severo-Evensky subdialects; Middle Even language: Anyusky, Allaikhovsky, Momsky, Tomponsky subdialects; Western Even language: Sakkyrsky, Tyugesirsky and Yukagirsky subdialects; Armansky dialect (Comparative dictionary of Tungusic languages 1975-1977).

According to the classification by A.A. Burykin, there are 26 dialects and subdialects: Eastern Even language: Kamchatsky dialect (Bystrinsky and Olyutorsky subdialects), Oklansky dialect, Ol’sky dialect (Penzhinsky, Gizhiginsky, Tavatumsky, Ol’sky, Tauysky, Priandyrsky subdialects), Prikolymsky subdialect (subdialect of the Evens of Berezovka and Rassokhino, subdialect of the Ulakhan-Chistaysky Evens), Ten’kinsky dialect; Western Even language: Arkinsky subdialect, Ust-Maysky subdialect, Ulyinsky dialect, Verkhnekolymsky dialect, Nizhnekolymsky dialect, Indigirsky dialect (Oymyakonsky, Tomponsky, Momsky subdialects), Allaikhovsky dialect (subdialect), Ust-Yansky dialect, Sakkyrsky dialect (Tyugesirsky and Lamunkhinsky dialects), Armansky dialect (Burykin 2004).

The above classifications are different both in the names and the numbers of the presented dialects. At the present time, all the classifications need clarifications and additions based on the new data on the phonetics and the fixed peculiarities of the morphology, the most distinctive lexical peculiarities of the dialects.

The fieldwork on the territorial variants of Even language is still in process. For now, only the Eastern area of the Evens’ settlements (Kamchatka, Chukotka, Magadan Oblast’, Khabarovsk Krai) has been studied well; in the territory of Yakutia the research is not

complete. To complete the map of dialects and subdialects of Even language, it is necessary to collect information on the certain subdialects and dialects.

The present language data on the certain areas of Yakutia, such as Ust-Yansky, Verkhnekolymsky, Nizhnekolymsky, Oymyakonsky, Tomponsky are inconsistent both in the qualitative and quantitative way, which prevents the researchers from determining the area of these or those dialects, from distinguishing and separating the subdialects of Middle and Western Even languages from each other. It appears important to consider that the modern linguistic borderlines between the subdialects do not match the administrative entities’ borders, so the linguistic division of each territorial entity has to be done in comparison with the dialects of the neighbouring districts. Considering the subdialects of Even language we come to conclusion that the present linguistic landscape may be formed by the geographic one which does not exist anymore.

So, today linguists are to solve the problem of marking the areas of each dialect, of describing dialects and subdialects of Even language in a systematic way, of revealing their linguistic peculiarities and systematization of the acquired information. A new, complete and detailed classification, based on the linguistic properties of dialects and subdialects that divide these linguistic entities from one another, is highly required; to do it, it is necessary to summarize all the present information on the in the insufficiently studied dialects and subdialects, especially those spoken in the territory of Yakutia. It is important to consider the functional specificity of Even language under the modern conditions and the peculiarities of the ethnocultural situation.

Dialects and subdialects of Even language need to be classified on the linguistic distinctive features of the dialects and subdialects. The

classification has to integrate all the previous classification of the Even language dialects, and to include some of the dialects and subdialects that have not been studied properly or classified in a sufficient way.

Today the researchers of the languages spoken by small-numbered peoples of the North face the task to preserve and develop the

extincting languages by means of linguistic methods. For this reason, the researches of the dialects and subdialects of Even language spoken today has a great applied significance for lexicography (compiling maps and dictionaries), for creating academic grammar books and for the maximally efficient description of the languages of the small-numbered peoples.

References

1. Burykin A.A. *Iazyk malochislennogo naroda v ego pis'mennoy forme* [The written form of a small-numbered people's language]. Saint Petersburg, 2004.
2. Dutkin Kh.I. *Allaikhovskiy govor evenov Yakutii* [Allaikhovskiy subdialect of the Yakut Evens]. Saint Petersburg, 1995.
3. Dutkin Kh.I. *Tundrennyy dialekt zapadnogo narechiia evenskogo iazyka* [Tundra dialect of Western Even language]. Saint Petersburg, 2009.
4. Kuz'mina R.P. *Iazyk lamunkhinskikh evenov* [The language of the Lamunchino Evens]. Novosibirsk, 2010.
5. Lebedev V.D. *Iazyk evenov Yakutii* [The language of the Yakut Evens]. Leningrad, 1978.
6. Lebedev V.D. *Okhotskiy dialekt evenskogo iazyka* [Okhotsky dialect of Even language]. Leningrad, 1982.
7. Novikova K.A. *Ocherki dialektov evenskogo iazyka. Ol'skiy govor* [Studies of Even language dialects. Ol'sky subdialect], Volume 1. Moscow, Leningrad, 1960.
8. Robbek V.A. *Iazyk evenov Berezovki* [Language of the Berezovka Evens]. Leningrad, 1989.
9. *Sravnitel'nyy slovar' tunguso-man'chzhurskikh iazykov* [Comparative dictionary of Tungusic languages], Volumes 1-2. Leningrad, 1975; 1977.
10. Tsintsius V.I. *Ocherk grammatiki evenskogo (lamutskogo) iazyka* [Study of the Even (Lamut) language grammar], Leningrad, 1947.

Диалекты эвенского языка: состояние исследований и классификация

С.И. Шарина

Северо-Восточный федеральный университет

им. М.К. Аммосова

Россия 677000, Якутск, ул. Белинского, 58

Статья посвящена исследованию диалектов эвенского языка, их классификации. Рассматриваются наиболее актуальные исследования эвенского языка. Ставится практическая задача сохранения редких языков коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока.

Ключевые слова: эвенский язык, коренные малочисленные народы Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока, диалекты.

Работа выполнена в рамках исследований, финансируемых Красноярским краевым фондом поддержки научной и научно-технической деятельности, а также в рамках тематического плана СФУ по заданию Министерства образования и науки Российской Федерации.
