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Interference in the Russian speech of the Nganasans[1]

Russian of bilinguals interests many researchers, see, for example, some recent works on Forest Enets Russian (Stoynova, Shluinskiy 2010), Daghestanian Russian (Daniel, Dobrushina 2013), and Erzya Russian (Shagal 2016). Nganasan Russian has not yet been described, which we intend to do.

The Nganasan people inhabit the Taimyr Peninsula in Northern Siberia. Historically, the Nganasan language (< Samoyedic) and later Taimyr Pidgin Russian (Govorka) were the only languages spoken by the Nganasan (Stern 2005), but with education in Russian and village settlement, Russian became prevalent. However, the local variety of Russian differs from the standard Russian as well as from Govorka.

This paper investigates the peculiarities of the Russian language spoken by the Nganasan community in order to compare the results with typical features of Govorka. Govorka has already been thoroughly investigated; for example, see (Helimskij 2000, Urmanchieva 2010, Stern 2009). My analysis of Nganasan Russian is based on a corpus of narratives.[2] I have transcribed and annotated 3.5 hours of Nganasan Russian (11 speakers) with 448 irregularities in total.

In Nganasan Russian, numerous gender mismatches are noticed, for example, in (1) *jeda* 'food' is feminine, but the adjective *xorošij* 'good' and pronoun *kakoj* 'what' is in masculine form. Apparently this happens because of the lack of the respective category in Nganasan.

(1) **kakoj** *pr'am* **jeda**-*to* **xorošij** *sovsem*
     'How good this food is!'

Nganasan Russian is also characterized by non-standard use of mediopassive, see (2) with the omission of -*s'a* and (3) with the excess -*s'a*:

(2) *a vmesto n'ego op'at' eta vot eta vot pov'azka* **val'ajet**
     'And instead of him again this bandage is lying about'.

(3) *davaj n'e* **propadajs'a**
     'Don't get lost!'

Frequent features as well are the wrong aspect choice and non-standard argument encoding, which sometimes can be explained by direct structural copying from the first language to the second one. For example, in Standard Russian the verb *popas't'* 'hit' requires the preposition *v* 'in' (*popas't' v ol'en'a* 'to hit a deer'), while in Nganasan the verb дерыӡысы 'hit' is transitive. That is why in (4) the verb *popas't'* 'hit' in Nganasan Russian becomes transitive as well:

(4) *poprobujt'e* **jego popas't'** *str'eloj*
     'Try to hit him with an arrow.'

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[2] We thank V. Iu. Gusev for the provided audiofiles.

The number of features varies from speaker to speaker, and speech of some of them is distinguished by many features that are typical of Govorka. For example, some speakers use the postposition *m'esto* 'place', which inter alia has locative meaning (Gusev 2012):

(5) *tut **r'eka m'esto** stojat von*
    'They stand here near the river.'

In the talk, I will compare Nganasan Russian with Standard Russian and Govorka in order to check whether they constitute a scale in a post-pidgin continuum. I will also appeal to the Nganasan language data in order to trace its influence on Russian of Nganasan speakers.

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