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Kinship terminology of the Middle Ob Selkup (based on A.P. Dulzon's field data)

In 1954 A.P. Dulzon published the article “Kinship terms in the languages of Narym krai and Chulym basin” containing a comprehensive list of the Middle Ob Selkup (also known as Narym Selkup) kinterms. In that work he concluded that Selkup and Chulym Turkic kinship terminologies could be straightforwardly translated into one another and therefore represented instances of the same type (he called it Turanian-Ganowanian following L.H. Morgan, nowadays it is referred to as Iroquois). This typological unification with Turkic systems lead other researchers — e.g. G.V. Dzibel (2001) — to identify the Selkup kinship system as belonging to well-established Omaha-type.

Later on Dulzon continued his work on collecting field data on the Selkup language and kinship terminology, which resulted in several volumes of field notes, wordlists, genealogical schemata, etc., that was archived at the Laboratory for Siberian Languages at the Tomsk State Pedagogical University. This data contradicts some of his original findings and interpretations, but he had never published any of his Selkup kinship related material collected after 1954.

My analysis of Dulzon's unpublished data clearly shows that Selkup kinship terminology lacks diagnostic features of the Omaha-type systems, such as lumping together under the same terms one's parents and their same-sex siblings (father and father's brother, mother and mother's sister, respectively), mother's brother and mother's brother's son, mother and mother's brother's daughter. But generational skewing typical for several peoples of Siberia and beyond — manifested through the usage of the same terms for elder members of descending generation and for younger members of ascending one — reported by Dulzon has been confirmed.

In my presentation I am going to present a systematic view of the Middle Ob Selkup kinship terminology reconstructable from Dulzon's both published and unpublished data.