

# MULTILINGUALISM AND LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES IN THE LOWER REACHES OF YENISEY



Olesya Khanina

Institute of Linguistics, RAS

**RSF**

Russian  
Science  
Foundation

## GOAL OF THE TALK

- to contribute to a typology of language practices in small-scale multilingual communities
- 1930 – 1970
- Samoyedic (Uralic) speakers of the north-eastern part of the lower Yenisey

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

- This is a part of a bigger sociolinguistic and ethnographic study of communities of practice/social networks (1930-1970), geographically based in Vorontsovo and Ust-Awam:
  - via a study of linguistic biographies of the generation born in the 1900-1930s as developed in a series of extended semi-structured interviews with their descendants (2017, ca. 20 interviews)
    - cf. papers by Dobrushina & Zakirova, Pupynina, Amelina
- Language ideologies cannot be compared with language practices, as this is a study of the past.
- Background of this study: study of languages of the area and their mutual influences.



1	<b>Все эти вопросы заполняются для каждого человека, про которого респондент может рассказать: эго, родители, сиблинги, бабушки</b>
2	Этническое имя (если есть)
3	Фамилия, имя, отчество
4	Год рождения, год смерти
5	Этничность: самосознание - почему, кем считают окружающие - почему, объективные данные (если возможно)
6	Краткая биография 1: дошкольное детство (особое внимание к social networks: с кем жил, с кем дружил; особое внимание к migration)
7	Краткая биография 2: школа (особое внимание к social networks: с кем жил, с кем дружил, с кем работал; особое внимание к migration)
8	Краткая биография 3: после школы до брака/детей (особое внимание к social networks: с кем жил, с кем дружил, с кем работал; особое внимание к migration)
9	Краткая биография 4: в браке/с детьми (особое внимание к social networks: с кем жил, с кем дружил, с кем работал; особое внимание к migration)
10	Краткая биография 5: взрослые дети/внуки (особое внимание к social networks: с кем жил, с кем дружил, с кем работал; особое внимание к migration)
11	Языки респондента: качественная оценка по каждому языку, умение писать/читать, отношение к каждому языку (на чем любит говорить)
12	История и контекст усвоения каждого языка
13	С кем на каком языке говорит и говорил (включая животных - олени, собаки, птицы и т.д.), с кем на каком языке (было) никак нельзя говорить
14	Знание фольклора на каждом языке
15	Школа: где она была, интернат или нет, в каком году пошел респондент, на каких языках говорил до школы, какие языки усвоил в школе
16	Какой этничности были люди там, где жил респондент, и на каких языках в каких ситуациях они говорили (для всех уровней - поселок, деревня, город)
17	Какое к каждому этносу/языку было отношение респондента в каждом месте из 16? Что он считал нормальным - общение с кем на каком языке
18	Какое к каждому этносу/языку было отношение окружающих в каждом месте из 16? Что считалось нормальным - общение с кем на каком языке
19	Приезжали ли гости в детстве? Этничность? На каких языках, с кем и когда они говорили
20	К кому ездили родители в гости в детстве респондента (брали его/ее с собой)? Этничность? На каких языках, с кем и когда они говорили
21	Контекст интервью: что респондент знает про интервьюера и какие у него ожидания относительно того, что тот хочет услышать
22	Технические данные интервью: дата, место, наличие аудио/бумажных записей, кто еще присутствовал, длительность





**Russia**

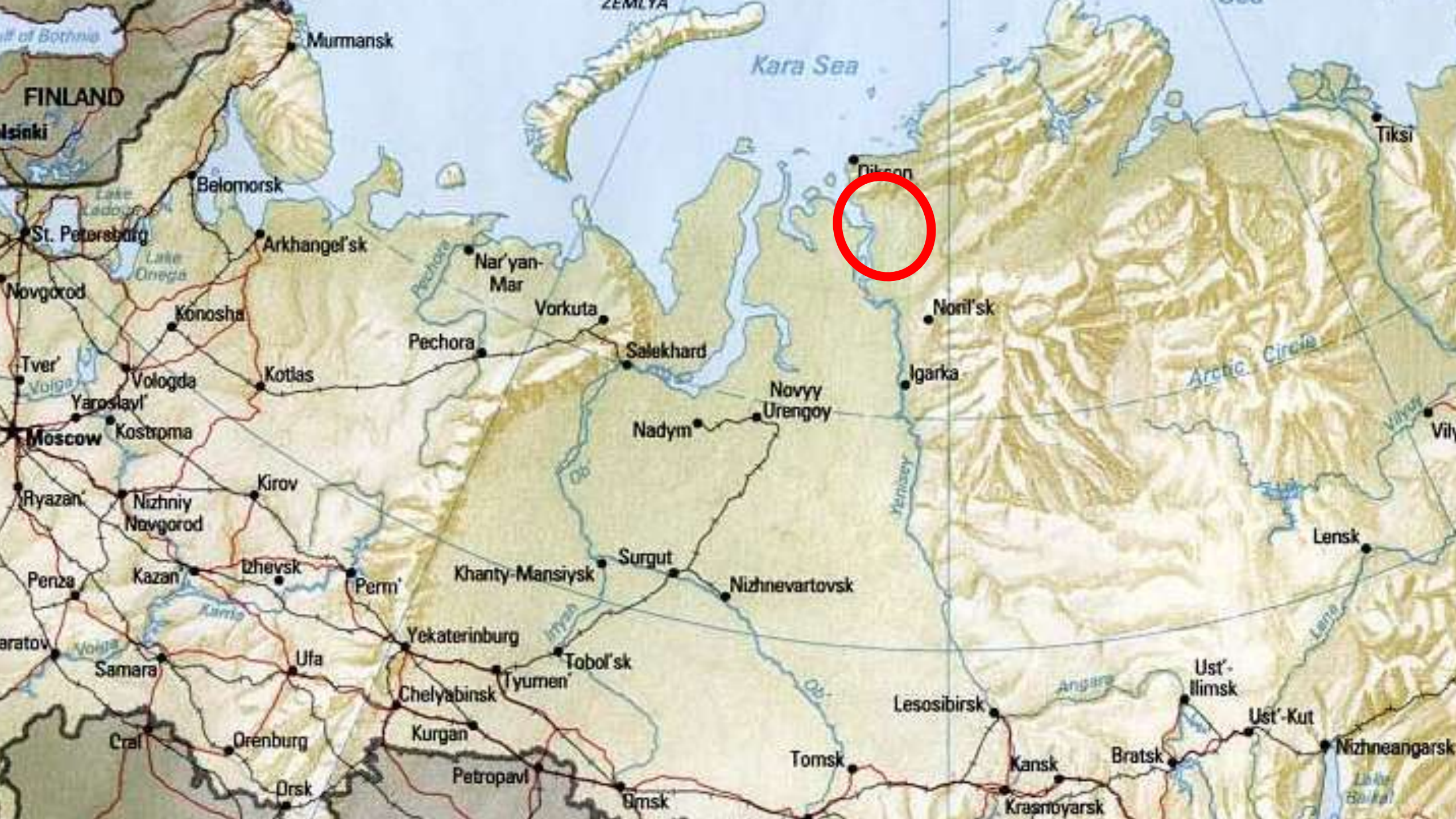
- International boundary
- ★ National capital
- +— Railroad
- Road

0 250 500 750 Kilometers  
0 250 500 750 Miles

Lambert Conformal Conic Projection, SP 47/62 N

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.





FINLAND

Helsinki

St. Petersburg

Novgorod

Tver'

Moscow

Ryazan'

Penza

Samará

Orsk

Orsk

Belomorsk

Arkhangel'sk

Konosha

Vologda

Kostroma

Kirov

Izhevsk

Ufa

Orenburg

Orsk

Murmansk

Arkhangel'sk

Konosha

Kotlas

Kirov

Izhevsk

Perm'

Ufa

Orenburg

Orsk

Nar'yan-Mar

Vorkuta

Pechora

Salekhard

Nadym

Surgut

Yekaterinburg

Chelyabinsk

Petropavl

Nar'yan-Mar

Vorkuta

Salekhard

Nadym

Surgut

Yekaterinburg

Chelyabinsk

Petropavl

Orsk

Vorkuta

Salekhard

Novyy Urengoy

Nadym

Surgut

Yekaterinburg

Chelyabinsk

Petropavl

Orsk

Novyy Urengoy

Nadym

Surgut

Yekaterinburg

Chelyabinsk

Petropavl

Orsk

Kara Sea

Dikson

Noril'sk

Igarka

Novyy Urengoy

Nadym

Surgut

Yekaterinburg

Chelyabinsk

Petropavl

Orsk

Noril'sk

Igarka

Novyy Urengoy

Nadym

Surgut

Yekaterinburg

Chelyabinsk

Petropavl

Orsk

Lesosibirsk

Kansk

Krasnoyarsk

Ust'-Ilimsk

Ust'-Kut

Nizhneangarsk

Arctic Circle

Lensk

Ust'-Ilimsk

Ust'-Kut

Nizhneangarsk

Tiksi

Vilyuysk

Vilyuysk

Vilyuysk

Vilyuysk

Vilyuysk

Vilyuysk

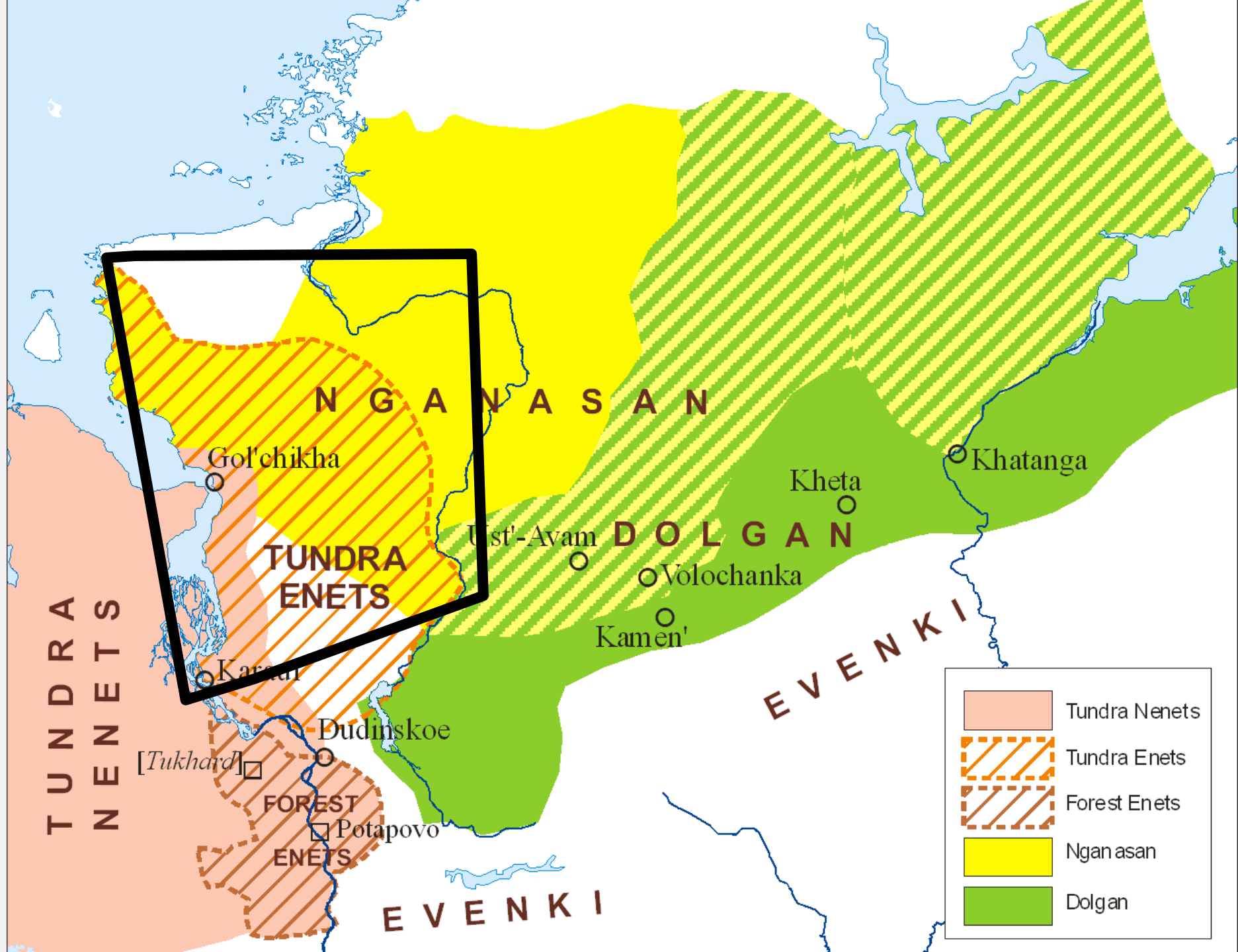
Vilyuysk



MAP BY  
YURI  
KORYAKOV

1930-1970

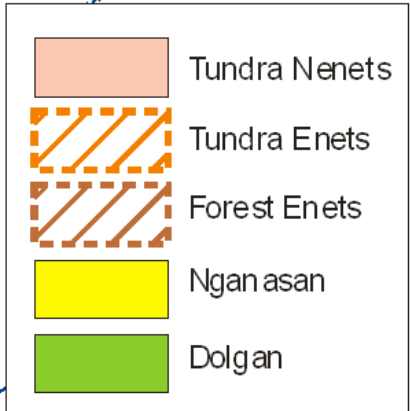
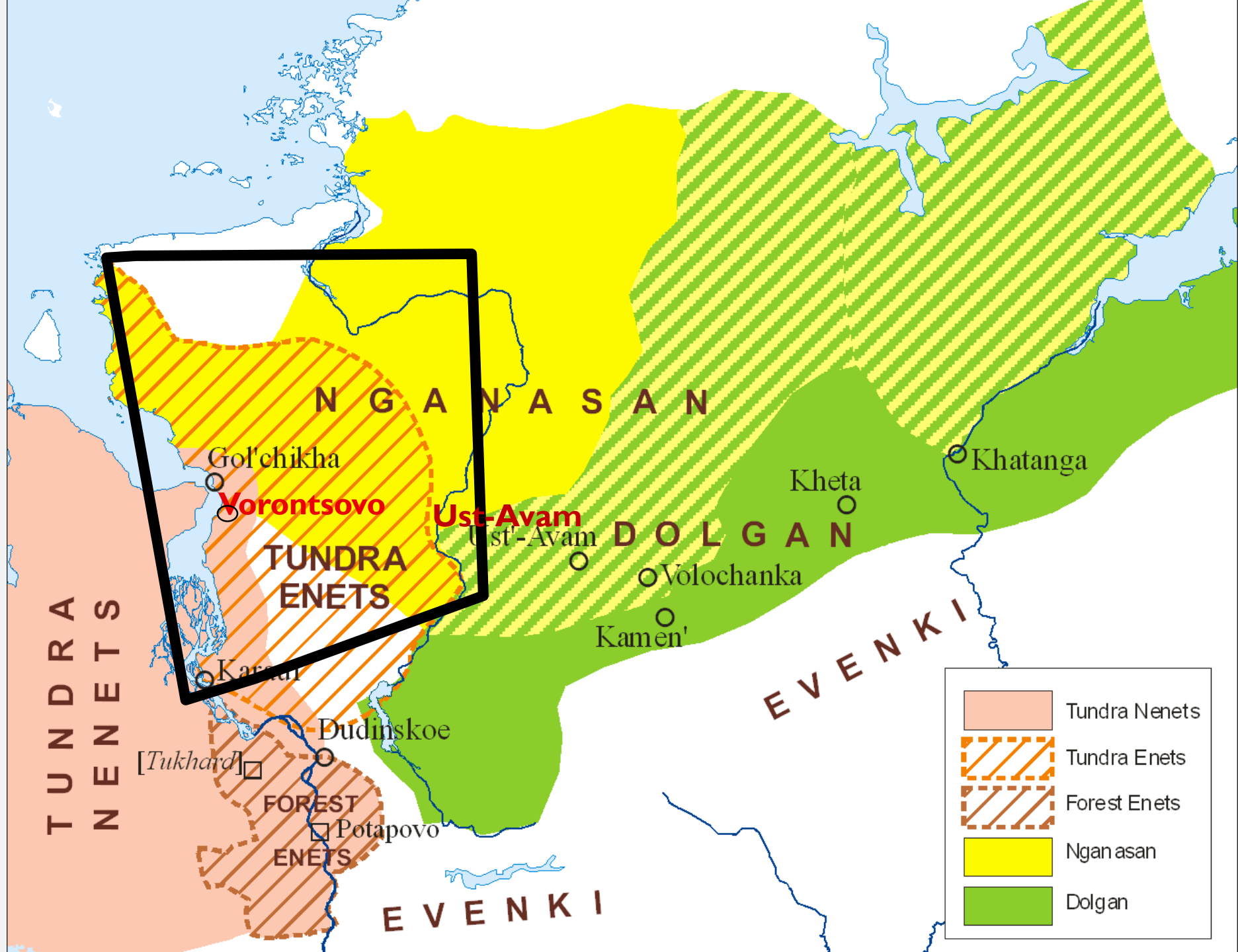
(INSTITUTE OF  
LINGUISTICS)



MAP BY  
YURI  
KORYAKOV

1930-1970

(INSTITUTE OF  
LINGUISTICS)





## LINGUISTIC PRACTICES (I)

- Mixed marriages, visits to family/friends in spring, exchange of reindeers
- Languages are related (Northern Samoyedic):
  - TE/TN ~ German/Dutch, Russian/Polish
  - TE/Ng ~ German/Norwegian, Russian/Bulgarian
  - TN/Ng ~ English/Norwegian, Russian/Latvian
- After some period of close contact (e.g. life in the same household), all speakers develop at least some understanding skills
- No external lingua franca

## LINGUISTIC PRACTICES (2)

- Vorontsovo:
  - Numbers of ethnic groups (1926): TE (330) > TN (150) > Ng (50)
  - Numbers of ethnic groups (1960s): TE (160) > TN (200) > Ng (5)
  - **Individual repertoires, active bilingualism (by numbers):**  
**TE-TN > TE-TN-Ng (1930-1940), TE-TN > TN > TE-TN-Ng (1950-1960),**
- Ust-Avam:
  - Numbers of ethnic groups (1960s): Ng (230) > TE (35) > TN (5)
  - **Individual repertoires, active bilingualism (by numbers):**  
**Ng > Ng-TE > Ng-TE-TN > Ng-TN**

Dolgikh 1949, Vasilyev & Tugolukov 1960, Vasilyev 1970



## LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

- no prestige asymmetry in any case
- multilingualism is estimated positive: when assessing linguistic proficiencies of their late relatives, respondents usually overestimate than underestimate
- such overestimation is connected to the ideology of ‘it was normal to at least understand the languages of those ethnic groups that you have contacts with’ – even if such contacts were sporadic (cf. ability of Ng in Ust-Avam to understand TN)
- high level of linguistic tolerance

# LINGUISTIC TOLERANCE

- I have found basically no negative attitudes to any type of linguistic activity:
  - everyone speaks the way s/he wants, and if the motivation is not understood by a respondent, it's always 'how strange, I do not understand' and never 'How awful, disgraceful, S/he was mocked for it, S/he should not have done it'.
  - (This is true for indigenous languages of the region: the ability to speak only Russian is always commented on negatively.)
- Likewise, no moral or aesthetical value was ascribed to any linguistic event/repertoire.



## A POSSIBLE EXCEPTION: TN IN VORONTSOVO

- A group of TE migrated from the Vorontsovo area to the Ust-Avam area in the 1930s
- Reasons: famine, earlier collectivization/shamanism prosecution
- BUT also 'they were offended by the Tundra Nenets' (who were poorer before the Soviet times)
- In the 1930s-1960s TN became more numerous than TE who inhabited this area for at least 300 years; there appeared TN who did not speak TE

## WHAT IS A NATIVE LANGUAGE?

- The language s/he has acquired first? - Not necessarily
- The language of his/her mother/father? - Not necessarily
- The language of the predominant ethnic group around him/her? - Not necessarily
- **The language of the ethnic group that s/he considers himself/herself belonging to?**
  - **Yes, but note that a person can change his/her ethnic group during his/her lifespan!**



# LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

- Languages do express identity in essentialist fashion (as in Western language ideologies):
  - there are no dual identities,
  - identities are not used in indexical fashion (as when speakers index different identities to different stakeholders),
  - BUT the identity may change once (?) during the speakers' life
    - e.g. *Those Enets, who became Nganasans, they could speak their language and Nganasan*
    - TE who moved to a predominantly Ng area changed their identities to Ng (spoke Ng to their spouses and to their children, spoke TE with other TE adults)
    - a TN woman is considered TE when she arrives to a clear TN settlement, at the left bank, though she herself does not speak TE;
    - women can change their identity after marriage – 2 cases (first husband vs. second husband);

## LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND LANGUAGE CHOICE

- Language used with the spouse and children: the language of the ethnic identity of the father (note that men do not change identity by marriage)
- TE was always used among adults who could speak TE ~ ‘language of the adults, of the old folk’ ~ language of the storytelling
- We do not know much about what was discussed by these adults in TE, as their descendants, who report these communicative events, did not understand TE!

# CONCLUSION

2 cases (Vorontsovo vs. Ust-Avam) with quite similar ideologies:

identity = language, but a change is possible (when the change happened in Ust-Avam, only the new native language was used with the children),

and it is 'natural' for TE to understand/speak the language of their neighbors


+ in the earlier times, for TN and Ng as well (why? reindeers?)

and similar dynamics: TE became assimilated by more numerous TN/Ng (more clear case in Ust-Avam, less clear case in Vorontsovo where the process was interrupted by a shift to Russian)


- Lüpke, Frederike. 2016. Uncovering small-scale multilingualism, In *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 4.2, 35-74.
- How do the cases described fit into the typology of multilingual settings?



**Table 1.** Parameters and values for a heuristic approach to multilingual settings

	<b>Values</b>		<b>Parameters</b>
<b>Reciprocal multilingualism</b>	Receptive multilingualism	Passive multilingualism	Comprehension and production of codes
No monolingualism practiced	Monolingualism practised by many group members	Monolingualism practised by all/most group members	Pervasiveness of multilingualism
Pervasive intrasentential code-mixing	Little code-mixing	No code-mixing, mainly code-switching	Code interaction
Multilingual ideologies	Partly erasing ideologies	Monolingual ideologies	Ideologies of multilingualism
Indexical identities	Dual identities	Essentialist identities	Scope of identities
			
<b>High degree of multilingualism</b>		<b>Low degree of multilingualism</b>	

**Table 1.** Parameters and values for a heuristic approach to multilingual settings

Values			Parameters
Reciprocal multilingualism	Receptive multilingualism	Passive multilingualism	Comprehension and production of codes
No monolingualism practiced	Monolingualism practised by many group members	Monolingualism practised by all/most group members	Pervasiveness of multilingualism
<b>Vorontsovo</b> Pervasive intrasentential code-mixing	<b>Ust-Avam</b> Little code-mixing	No code-mixing, mainly code-switching	Code interaction
Multilingual ideologies	Partly erasing ideologies	Monolingual ideologies	Ideologies of multilingualism
Indexical identities	Dual identities	Essentialist identities	Scope of identities
			
<b>High degree of multilingualism</b>		<b>Low degree of multilingualism</b>	

**Table 1.** Parameters and values for a heuristic approach to multilingual settings

Values			Parameters
Reciprocal multilingualism	Receptive multilingualism	Passive multilingualism	Comprehension and production of codes
No monolingualism practiced	Monolingualism practised by many group members	Monolingualism practised by all/most group members	Pervasiveness of multilingualism
<b>Vorontsovo</b> Pervasive intrasentential code-mixing	<b>Ust-Avam</b> Little code-mixing	No code-mixing, mainly code-switching	Code interaction
Multilingual ideologies	Partly erasing ideologies	Monolingual ideologies	Ideologies of multilingualism
Indexical identities	Dual identities	Essentialist identities	Scope of identities
<b>High degree of multilingualism</b>		<b>Low degree of multilingualism</b>	



**Table 1.** Parameters and values for a heuristic approach to multilingual settings

Values			Parameters
Reciprocal multilingualism	Receptive multilingualism	Passive multilingualism	Comprehension and production of codes
No monolingualism practiced	Monolingualism practised by many group members	Monolingualism practised by all/most group members	Pervasiveness of multilingualism
<b>Vorontsovo</b> Pervasive intrasentential code-mixing	<b>Ust-Avam</b> Little code-mixing	No code-mixing, mainly code-switching	Code interaction
Multilingual ideologies	Partly erasing ideologies	Monolingual ideologies	Ideologies of multilingualism
Indexical identities	Dual identities	Essentialist identities	Scope of identities
High degree of multilingualism		Low degree of multilingualism	

**Table 1.** Parameters and values for a heuristic approach to multilingual settings

Values			Parameters
Reciprocal multilingualism	Receptive multilingualism	Passive multilingualism	Comprehension and production of codes
No monolingualism practiced	Monolingualism practised by many group members	Monolingualism practised by all/most group members	Pervasiveness of multilingualism
<b>Vorontsovo</b> Pervasive intrasentential code-mixing	<b>Ust-Avam</b> Little code-mixing	No code-mixing, mainly code-switching	Code interaction
Multilingual ideologies	Partly erasing ideologies	Monolingual ideologies	Ideologies of multilingualism
Indexical identities	Dual identities	Essentialist identities	Scope of identities
High degree of multilingualism		Low degree of multilingualism	





THANK YOU