



*Diversity of linguistic situations  
in Evenki local communities of Russia:  
language shift in different stages*

*Olga Kazakevich*

[kazakevich.olga@gmail.com](mailto:kazakevich.olga@gmail.com)

<http://www.lcl.srcc.msu.ru>

<http://siberian-lang.srcc.msu.ru>

Moscow, Institute of Linguistics, RAS, 06.04.2019

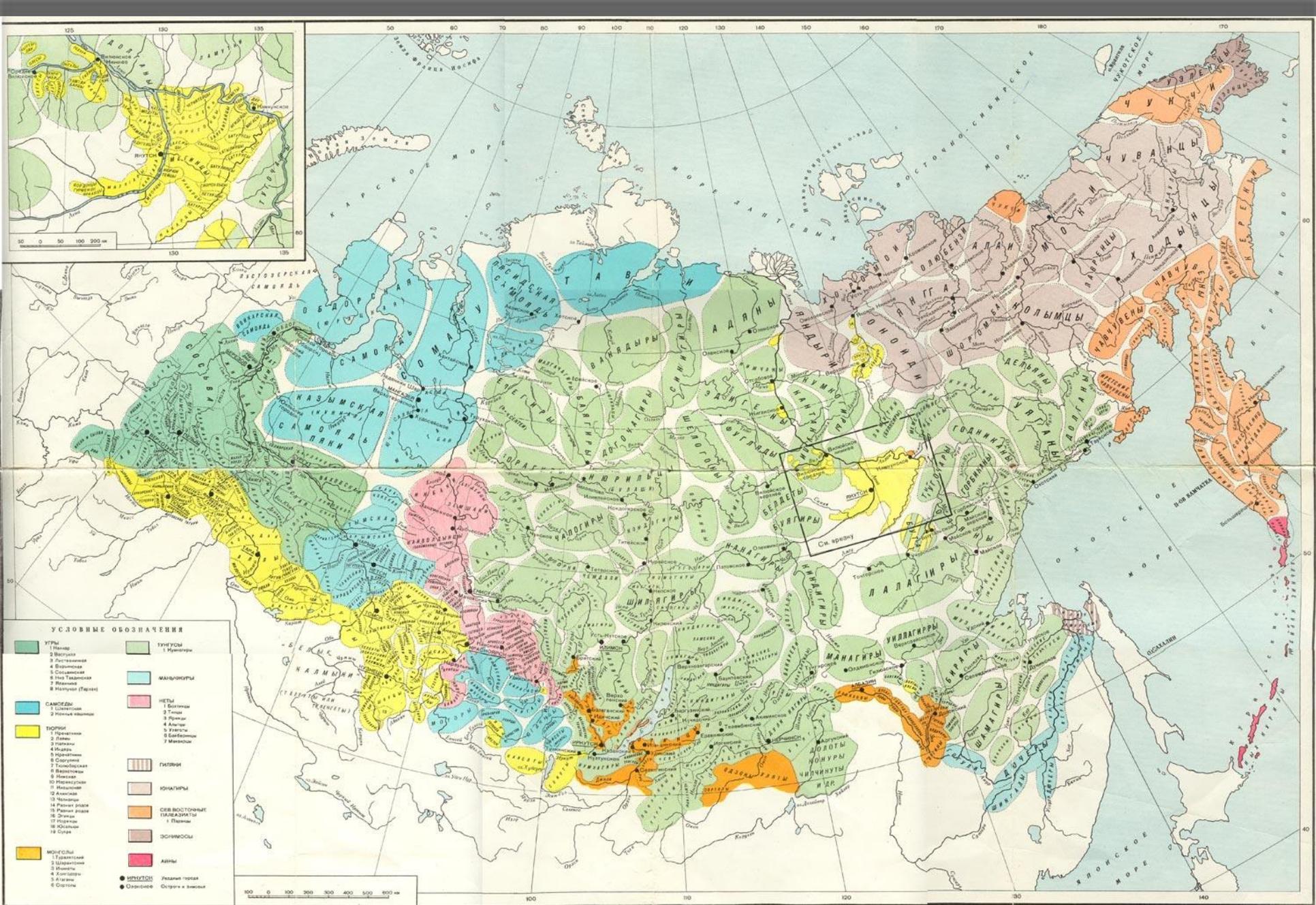
# Языки Сибири

|  |                             |  |                       |  |              |
|--|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|--------------|
|  | коми                        |  | казахский             |  | эвенкийский  |
|  | хантыйские                  |  | татарский             |  | эвенский     |
|  | мансийские                  |  | башкирский            |  | негидальский |
|  | ненецкий (тундровый)        |  | тувинский             |  | нанайский    |
|  | нещанский (лесной ненецкий) |  | тофаларский           |  | орокский     |
|  | энецкие                     |  | хакасский             |  | удэгейский   |
|  | нганасанский                |  | шорский               |  | ульчский     |
|  | селькупские                 |  | алтайский             |  | бурятский    |
|  |                             |  | якутский и долганский |  | русский      |



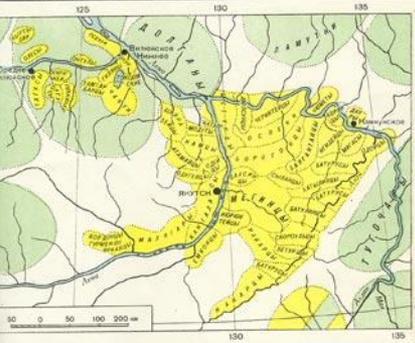
© Коряков Ю.Б., 2017

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
|  | кетский           |
|  | северноюкагирский |
|  | южноюкагирский    |
|  | чукотский         |
|  | корякский         |
|  | ительменский      |
|  | эскимосские       |
|  | алеутский         |
|  | нивхский          |
|  | корейский         |



УСЛОВНЫЕ ОБОЗНАЧЕНИЯ

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Урты</li> <li>2 Восточная</li> <li>3 Западная</li> <li>4 Верхняя</li> <li>5 Средняя</li> <li>6 Нижняя</li> <li>7 Тунгусы</li> <li>8 Маньчжурцы</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Тунгусы</li> <li>2 Маньчжурцы</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Самодеды</li> <li>2 Шангская</li> <li>3 Нюльча-шангская</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Неты</li> <li>2 Волочан</li> <li>3 Тельма</li> <li>4 Рязань</li> <li>5 Улаги</li> <li>6 Байгалан</li> <li>7 Маньчжурцы</li> </ul>               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Юрки</li> <li>2 Лянь</li> <li>3 Габрале</li> <li>4 Идари</li> <li>5 Иригале</li> <li>6 Согурале</li> <li>7 Тосонбаска</li> <li>8 Варисале</li> <li>9 Маньчжурцы</li> <li>10 Рибенгуале</li> <li>11 Маньчжурцы</li> <li>12 Аккале</li> <li>13 Чоюле</li> <li>14 Рибенчэе</li> <li>15 Рибенчэе</li> <li>16 Эричэе</li> <li>17 Юльчэе</li> <li>18 Сорча</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Гайлгы</li> <li>1 Юньгары</li> <li>1 Сев. восточные талары</li> <li>1 Маньчжурцы</li> <li>1 Эричэе</li> <li>1 Юньгары</li> <li>1 Аны</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Монголцы</li> <li>2 Тувинцы</li> <li>3 Шангские</li> <li>4 Умале</li> <li>5 Кюльчэе</li> <li>6 Агале</li> <li>7 Сорча</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Местность</li> <li>● Остров</li> <li>● Редкий город</li> <li>● Остров в заливе</li> </ul>   |



*Evenki (Altaic family, Tungusic group)*

*Population Census 2010 / 1989:*

*Ethnic group strength in RF 37843 / 29901*

*Number of speakers in RF 4802*

*Evenki speakers in the ethnic group 4310 (11,4%)*

*Claim Evenki to be their mother tongue*

*5688 (15,0 %) / 9097 (30,4 %)*

*Russian speakers 35674 (94,3 %)*

*Yakut speakers 17198 (45 %)*

*Three dialect groups:*

*Southern Evenki dialects*

*Northern Evenki dialects*

*Eastern Evenki dialects*

*I'll try to give a panorama of linguistic situations in Evenki local communities of two cities, 33 small towns and villages and 7 reindeer camps, spread over a vast territory from Narym in the west to Sakhalin in the East, and from Taimyr in the North to the Northern bank of the Baikal Lake in the South, and to analyze some factors (predominantly local) having influenced the development of linguistic situation in the groups.*



*The data used was collected within sociolinguistic surveys done in the period of 1996 – 2018 in Evenki local communities in the territory of*

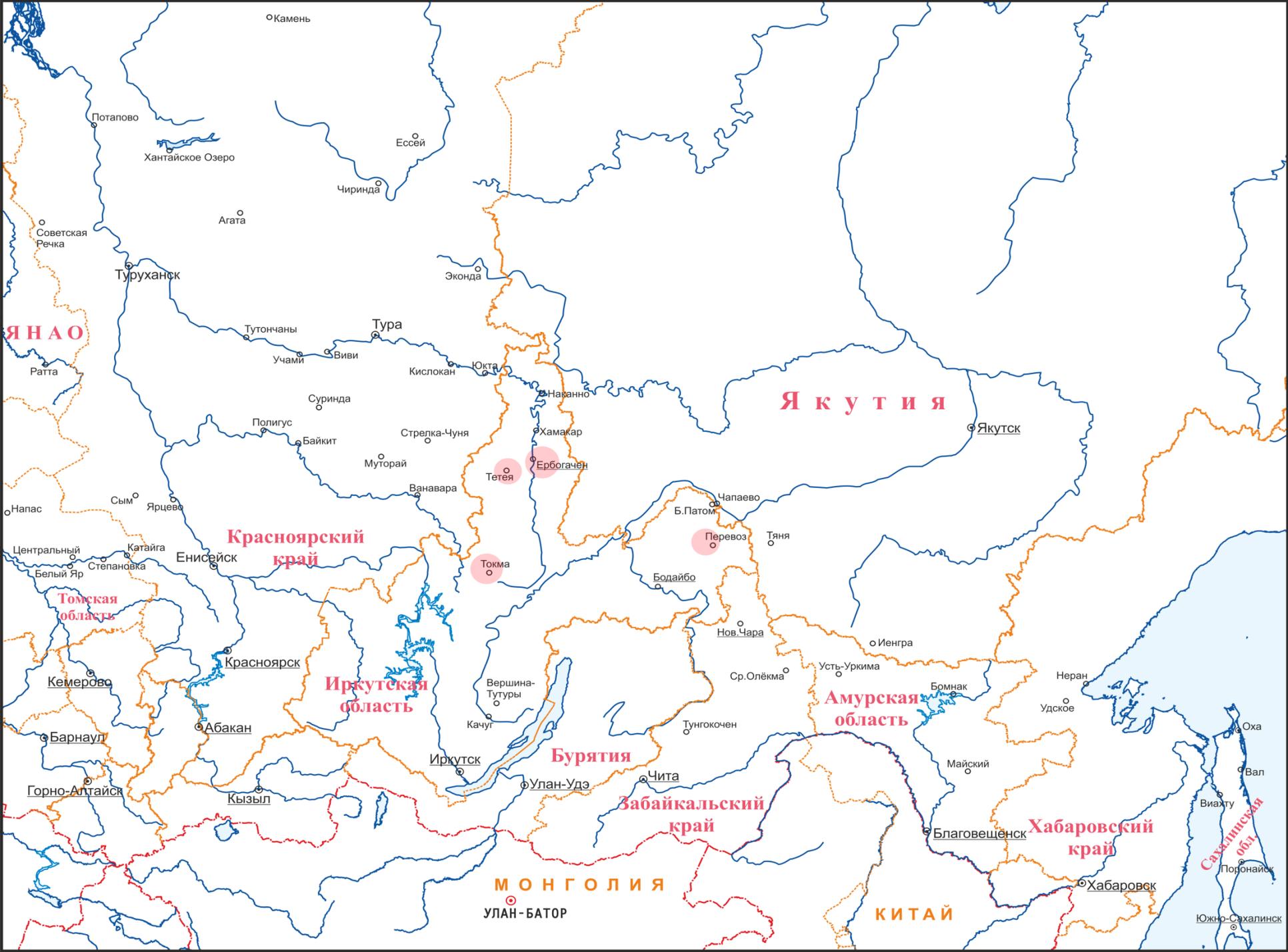
*the Upper Ket' and Kargasok districts, Tomsk region (2010);*

*the Krasnoselkup district Yamalo-Nenets autonomous area (1996, 2002, 2012, 2013);*

*the Yenisei (2009), Turukhansk (1998, 2006, 2014), Evenki (2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2014) and Taimyr (2011) districts, Krasnoyarsk territory;*

*the Katanga (2016, 2018), Kachug (2016) and Bodaibo (2018) districts, Irkutsk region;*

*the Okha, Nogliki and Aleksandrovsk-Sakhalin districts, Sakhalin region (2017).*



ЯНАО

Красноярский край

Томская область

Иркутская область

Бурятия

Забайкальский край

Амурская область

Якутия

Хабаровский край

Сахалинская обл.

МОНГОЛИЯ  
УЛАН-БАТОР

КИТАЙ

Потاپово

Хангайское Озеро

ОКамень

Ессей

Чиринда

Агата

Советская Речка

Туруханск

Эконда

Тутончаны

Тура

Ратта

Учами

Виви

Кислокан

Юкта

Суринда

Наванно

Полигус

Стрелка-Чуня

Хамакар

Байкит

Муторай

Ербогачен

Якутск

Ванавара

Тегей

Б.Патом

Чапаяво

Напас

Сым

Ярцево

Красноярск

Перевоз

Тяня

Центральный  
Белый Яр

Катайга  
Степановка

Енисейск

Токма

Бодайбо

Нов.Чара

Иенгра

Кемерово

Красноярск

Ср.Олёкма

Усть-Уркима

Бомнак

Неран

Удское

Барнаул

Абакан

Вершина-Тутуры

Качуг

Тунгокочен

Иркутск

Улан-Удэ

Чита

Майский

Удское

Оха

Вал

Горно-Алтайск

Кызыл

Иркутск

Улан-Удэ

Чита

Благовещенск

Хабаровск

Виахту

Подомайск

Южно-Сахалинск

*Linguistic data recorded during these expeditions are also taken into account, as well as published and archival data, describing or just reflecting the functioning of Evenki dialects in the Evenki local groups of the same territories during the previous century.*

*The size of the surveyed Evenki communities varies from about 500 (Surinda, Evenkiya) to 9 people (Tsentral'nyi, Upper-Ket' district).*

*Evenkis represent the majority of the population in almost half of the surveyed settlements: 97% in Vershina Tutury, 94 in Teteya, 93% in Ekonda, 87% in Surinda, 81% in Chirinda, 94% in Uchami and in Khamakar, 74% in Sovetskaya Rechka, 70% in Poligus, 65% in Yukta, 61% in Kislukan, 52% in Tutonchany and in Mutorai, 51% in Tokma.*

*All Evenkis in the surveyed communities are competent in Russian. Beside Russian, Evenki dialects of the communities contact (or once contacted) with Yakut, Dolgan, Buryat, Selkup, Forest Enets, Tundra Nenets, Ket, Uilta, Nivkh.*

*At the same time in all the communities the number of Evenkis having competence in the ethnic language is considerably less than the number of the community members.*

*The ethnic language transmission is still preserved only in one surveyed Evenki community - the community of Sovetskaya Rechka, Turukhansk district).*

*In the other communities the age of the youngest Evenki speakers varies from 18-20 to over 70.*

*The surveyed communities represent dialects of all the three dialect groups: Northern (Turukhansk district, Taimyr, Northern Evenkiya and most part of the Katanga district); Southern (Tomsk region, Yenisei region and Southern Evenkiya); Eastern (the south of the Katanga district and Kachug district, Sakhalin).*

*The comparison of contemporary linguistic data with the data from the first half of the previous century shows that there is at least one group, which changed its dialect during the last several decades: the Evenkis of Uchami shifted from their dialect of the Southern dialect group, which they brought from the southern part of Evenkiya, to the Ilimpiya dialect belonging to the Northern dialect group.*

*Sources of information on the functioning of Evenki dialects in the in the past (at least as deep as a century ago)*

*Documents of the past*

*A) Publications*

*-Statistics (Population censuses);*

*-Works by ethnographers, linguists, economists etc.*

*-Descriptions of the areas done by non-professionals (civil servants, travelers, etc.)*

*B) Archival data*

*Diaries, reports, letters...*

## *2. Retrospective*

### *A) Publications*

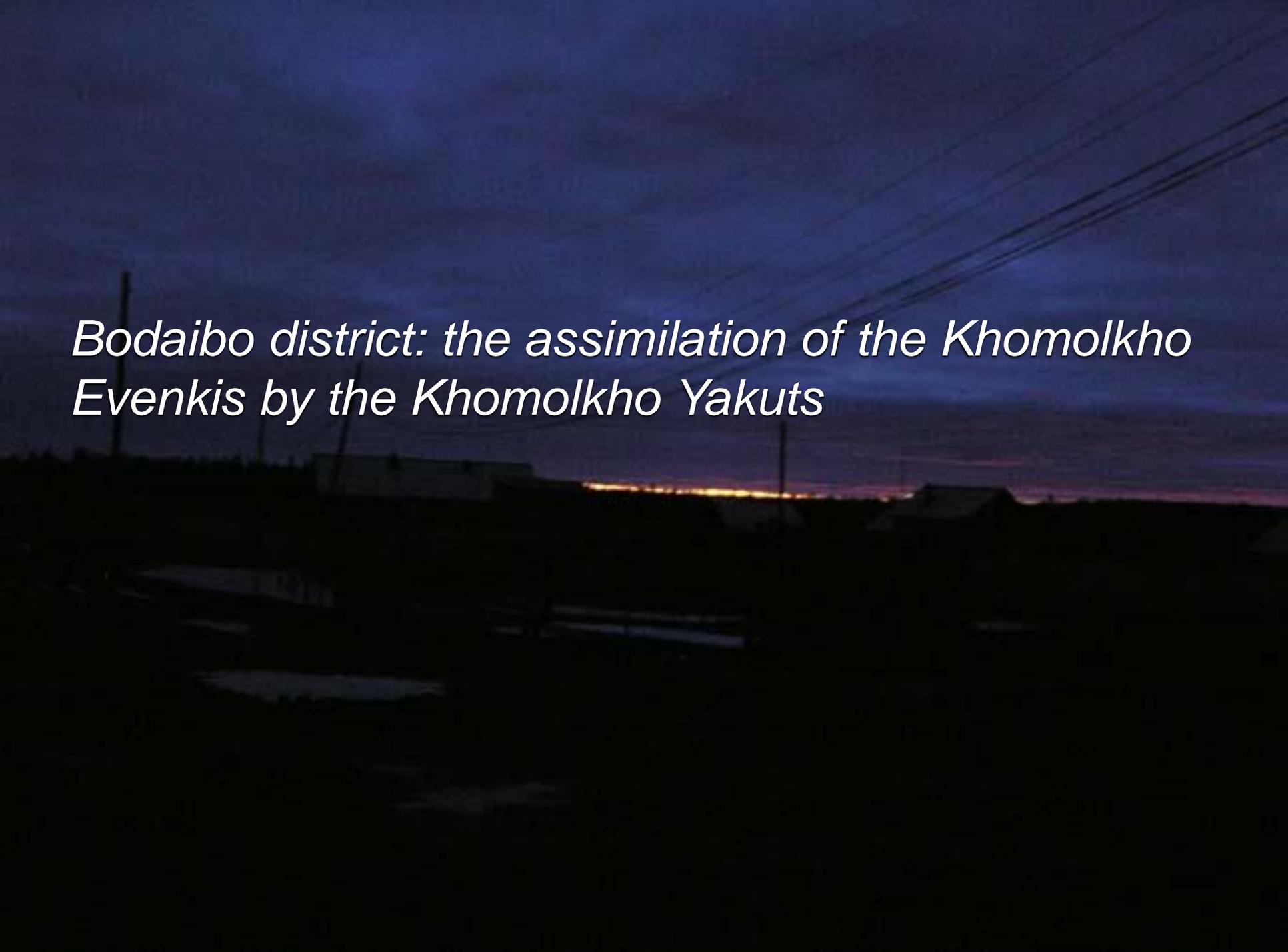
### *B) Field data*

- Sociolinguistic surveys: questionnaires giving information on linguistic biographies of the respondents and his/her parents and grandparents;*
- Interviews aiming at extracting information on the languages spoken in the past in the family and in the community;*
- Linguistic data (primarily family stories).*

*Now the Evenkis are shifting to Russian, but some 50-60 years ago there shifts to other contacting languages also happened.*

*We have two communities where such shifts are now fully completed:*

- the Evenkis of the Upper Taz (Ratta, Tolka) who shifted to Selkup and*
- the Evenkis of Perevoz (Khomolkho) who shifted to Yakut.*



*Bodaibo district: the assimilation of the Khomolkho  
Evenkis by the Khomolkho Yakuts*

Documents: published data

*Bodaibo district, Irkutsk region: linguistic situation in the Evenki local groups*

| Evenki population | Competence in Russian     |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Mamakan 48        | 8 (5 men, 3 women) 16,7%  |
| Tolondo 10        | 8 (5 men, 3 women) 80%    |
| Khomolkho 114     | 63 (40 men, 23 women) 55% |

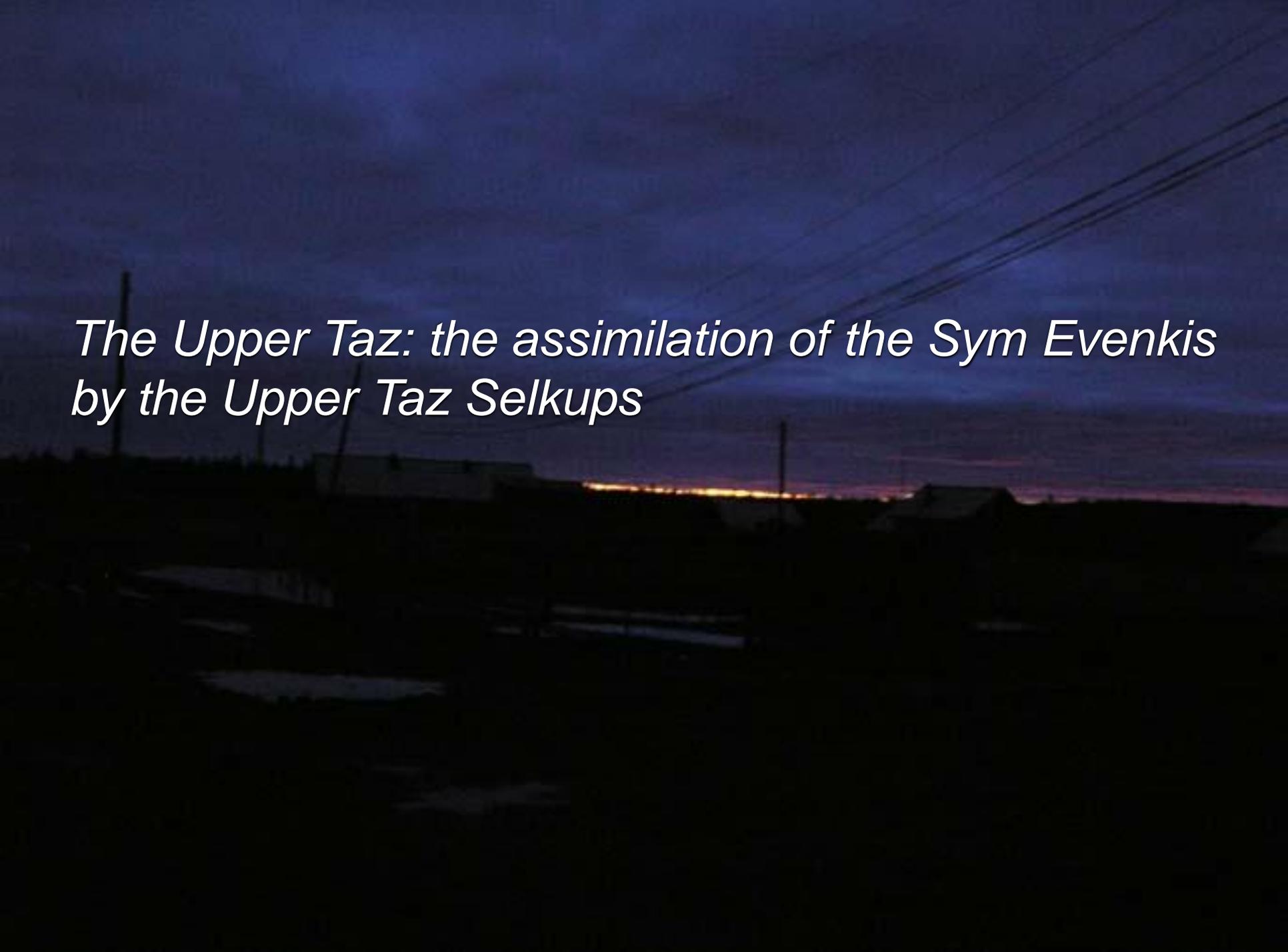
*Many Evenkis are competent in Yakut, some declared Yakut their native language.*

*(Samokhin 1929)*



# The Perevoz Evenkis having shifted to Yakut (2018)



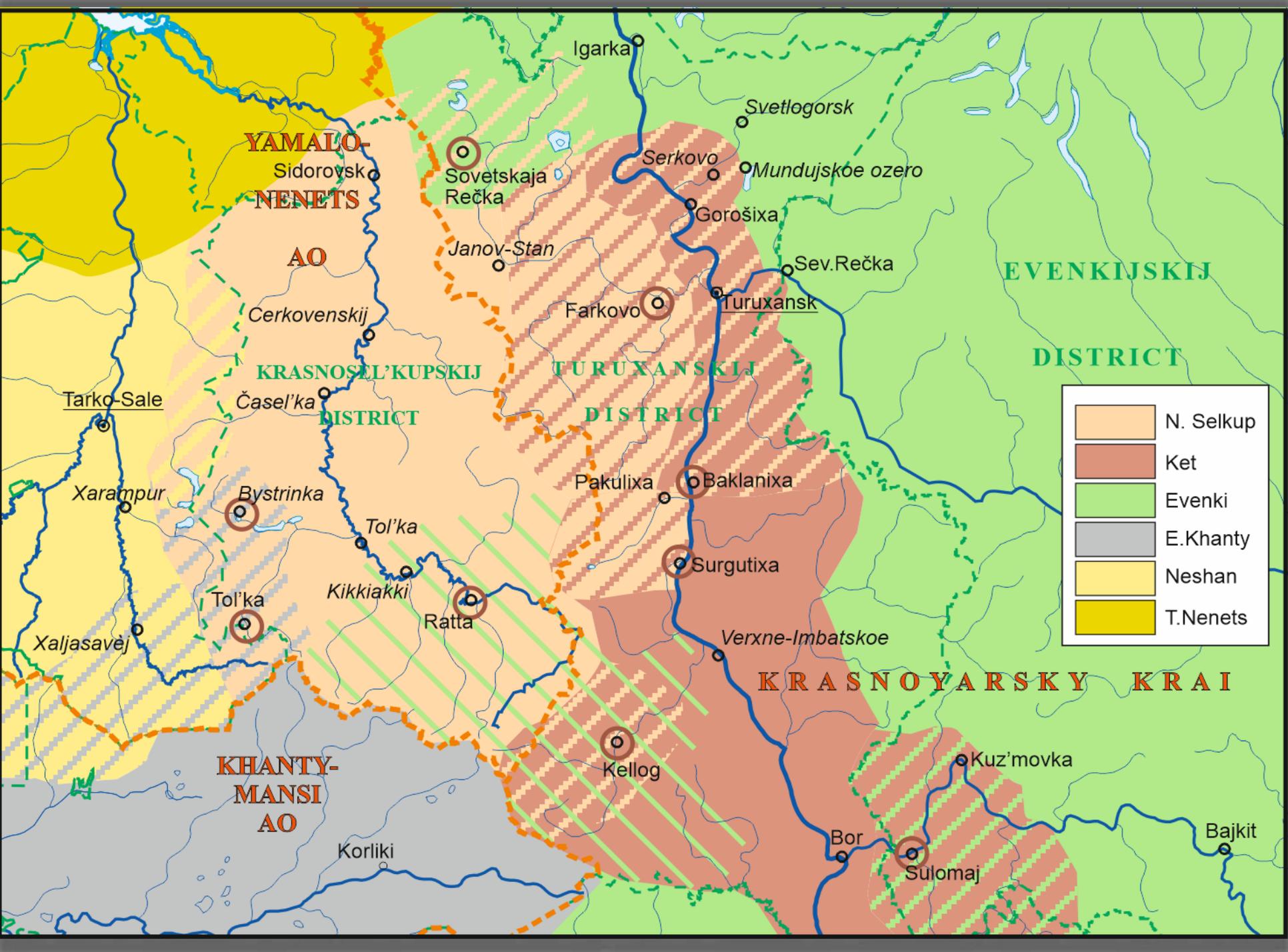
A dark, twilight landscape with a horizon line showing distant lights and power lines. The sky is a deep, dark blue, and the ground is mostly black with some faint, light-colored patches. A thin line of yellow and orange light is visible on the horizon, suggesting distant lights or a sunset. Several power lines are visible, stretching across the sky from the right side towards the left. The overall mood is somber and quiet.

*The Upper Taz: the assimilation of the Sym Evenkis  
by the Upper Taz Selkups*

## *Documents of the past: publications*

*«I didn't notice any tention between the Tunguses and the Selkups of the area. Though the Tunguses represent one third of the population there, they are almost fully assimilated with the Ostiak-Samoyeds (Selkups). Evenki-Ostiak-Samoyed family relations having a long history (several generations) can be found practically in every tent.*

*The Tungus (Evenki) language, though preserved in some households, practically is not used outside home even among relatives, the Evenkis of the Upper Taz use Selkup instead. The Tungusic youth and children forget their mother tongue, in some tents it is almost forgotten even by the middle-aged» (Skalon 1930: 130).*



|   |           |
|---|-----------|
|  | N. Selkup |
|  | Ket       |
|  | Evenki    |
|  | E. Khanty |
|  | Neshan    |
|  | T. Nenets |

**YAMALO-NENETS**

**AO**

**KRASNOSEL'KUPSKIJ**  
**DISTRICT**

**TURUXANSKIJ**  
**DISTRICT**

**EVENKIJSKIJ**  
**DISTRICT**

**KRASNOYARSKY KRAI**

**KHANTY-MANSI**  
**AO**

Igarka

Svetlogorsk

Sovetskaja Rečka

Serkovo

Mundujskoe ozero

Gorošixa

Janov-Stan

Sev. Rečka

Farkovo

Turuxansk

Cerkovenskiy

Tarko-Sale

Časel'ka

Xarampur

Bystrinka

Pakulixa

Baklanixa

Tol'ka

Surgutixa

Kikkiakki

Ratta

Verxne-Imbatskoe

Xaljasavėj

Tol'ka

Kellog

Kuz'movka

Korliki

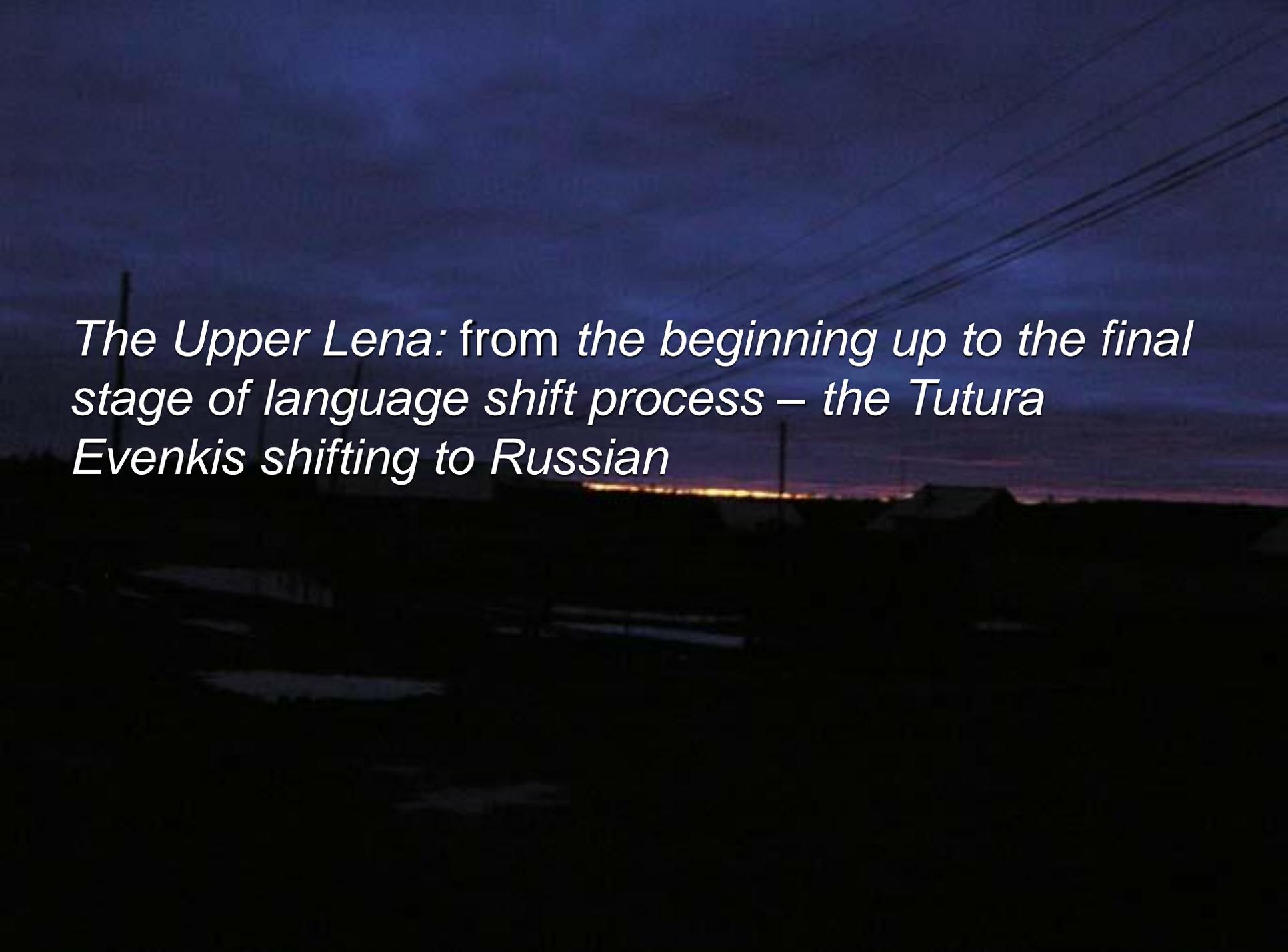
Bor

Sulomaj

Bajkit

# The Upper Taz Evenkis having shifted to Selkup (1996–2012)



A dark, twilight landscape with a faint horizon line and power lines. The sky is a deep, dark blue, and the ground is mostly black. A thin, horizontal line of light is visible on the horizon, possibly representing a distant town or a body of water reflecting light. Several power lines stretch across the upper right portion of the image.

*The Upper Lena: from the beginning up to the final stage of language shift process – the Tutura Evenkis shifting to Russian*

## Documents of the past: publication

*«Today the majority of the Kachug Evenkis communicate with each other in their mother tongue. At the same time, they speak Russian fluently, without accent. In the elder generation competence in Buryat is wide spread» (Tugolukov 1965: 21).*

*But:*

*«All that concerns primarily grown-ups; children being asked in Evenki prefer to answer in Russian» (Tugolukov 1965: 21, footnote 43).*



# The last Evenki speakers of Vershina Tutury: the final stage of the language shift (2016)



*Most vital Evenki communities in the area are the villages Sovetskaya Rechka (Turukhansk district, Krasnoyarsk territory) and Teteya (Katanga district, Irkutsk region).*

*Both villages are small, situated far from district centres. In both communities Evenkis build the overwhelming majority. In Sovetskaya Rechka beside the Evenki community there is also a small Selkup community partly assimilated by the local Evenkis, whereas Teteya is almost monoethnic. In both villages some families still keep reindeer, thus living outside the village in reindeer camps.*

# The Evenkis of Sovetskaya Rechka (2006-2014)



# The Evenkis of Teteya (2018)



*Last Evenki speakers in their communities*



# Last Evenki speakers and semi-speakers of Tokma



# Last Evenki speakers of Kachug





Keeping Upper Lena Evenki alive



*Thank you!*