A case-study in historical sociolinguistics beyond Europe: reconstructing patterns of multilingualism in a linguistic community in Siberia*

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Abstract
A collection of traditional and ‘old life’ stories recorded in the late 1940s is used to reconstruct the sociolinguistic situation of the Enets community in Northern Siberia from the 1850s until the 1930s. The Enets had regular contacts with a number of neighbouring indigenous peoples (Nganasans, Tundra Nenets, Selkups, Evenkis, Dolgans) and later with Russian newcomers. The oral histories often comment on language use, and as a result we can reconstruct not only the languages that the Enets people used in this period, but also the contexts in which they used them. The Enets community’s multilingualism was typically characterized by command of key neighbouring languages, with the occasional command of other more (geographically and socially) remote ones. With close neighbours, language choice seems to have had limited social load, while in cases of trade or agonistic contact, the choice of language in interethnic communication seems to have followed a principle of

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asymmetric convergence towards the language of the party with the greatest contextual social power. The analysis is founded on a database of dozens of communicative events mentioned in the oral stories (over 80 are analyzed). Ongoing fieldwork on the modern sociolinguistic situation suggests that until quite recently there was considerable stability in the sociolinguistic norms governing multilingual interaction among the Enets.

**Keywords:** Siberia, sociology of language, asymmetrical convergence, multilingualism, oral history

### 1 Introduction

Drawing on a collection of traditional and ‘old life’ stories recorded by the Soviet anthropologist and ethnographer, Boris Dolgikh, at the end of the 1940s, this paper attempts to reconstruct the sociolinguistic situation of the Enets community in Siberia from around the 1850s until around the 1930s. By *sociolinguistic situation* we mean the set of languages the Enets people used in this period, the contexts in which they used them, and the language ideologies within which the use of these languages was embedded.¹ Such reconstruction provides a useful background for a study of language contact and language change in this particular language, and in doing so, it constitutes a significant contribution to historical sociolinguistics by focusing on a non-European community.

There are still few studies of this kind in which we approach historical sociolinguistics from a macrolinguistic perspective and examine how past language(s) and varieties were

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¹ We analyze here only community multilingualism, without any further refinement of the picture by a study of individual multilingualism. This necessary restriction is due to the lack of relevant information on patterns of individual choices in our data (Oksaar 1992, 1999 present interesting studies of multilingualism with the help of the notion of social networks). In addition, we were not able to note variation in the Enets used by different social groups, as most of the texts we have used for this research were collected in a language other than Enets, namely, in Russian.
embedded in complex societies, characterized by multilingualism and code-switching, in particular. Commonly, different approaches to sociolinguistics may be combined and applied to historical sociolinguistics when historical data are used; these include the sociology of language, interactional sociolinguistics, variationist sociolinguistics, social dialectology and ethnography of communication (Fasold 1990 [1984]; Tuten and Herrero 2011: 285, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2012: 30). This paper deals with the historical reconstruction of the sociology of language in a community over a period of time. Historical sociology of language studies are well accepted as a part of modern historical sociolinguistics (Romaine 1988: 1459–1461, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2012: 30, Auer et al. 2015: 7). Other studies that resemble the research agenda explored here are Stewart (1964), Jahr (1999), McLeod (2003), Kessels-van der Heijde (2015), and Joby (2016). Our study contrasts with Moreno-Fernandez (2005), Millar (2010), or Burke (2004), as these focus on relatively large linguistic communities and consequently adopt a societal perspective. Stewart et al. are concerned with smaller communities and therefore work with data at the level of individuals in order to try to reconstruct individuals’ linguistic choices. In this paper, we attempt to productively use reports of individuals’ language choices as the basis for a historical reconstruction of the broader picture of multilingualism in this part of Siberia. Crucially, however, the language community of Siberia we describe has no written record, and only oral history is available to researchers. Tandefelt (2003) and Dobrushina (2013) also reconstruct multilingual situations with recourse to oral history and establish the utility of this type of data.

We will first provide some general background on the Enets, their history and their language in Section 2, followed by a discussion of the data and the methodology used for this study in Section 3. Next, we will provide an overview of the results of the sociolinguistic reconstruction of the Enets’ language use in the period between 1850 and 1930 (Section 4),
concluding with a brief summary of the reconstructed linguistic patterns and a short overview of the development of these patterns up to the present (Section 5).

2 General information about Enets

The Enets are an indigenous ethnic group of Northern Asia. Traditionally Enets used to dwell along the lower Yenisey River, in central Siberia, Russia (see Figures 1–2). This is a fairly small nation. In the beginning of the seventeenth century they numbered approximately 3000, by the end of the seventeenth century a series of smallpox epidemics caused a decline to approximately 800, later the number diminished to about 500 in the second half of the nineteenth century and to about 200 people in 2002. Fieldwork accounts (collected by the lead author) suggest that the current number of fully proficient native speakers of Enets is not more than 40, and no-one uses the language on a daily basis; the language is not transmitted to children, with the youngest speakers being 60 years old.

From the seventeenth century, when the colonization of Siberia began, to the end of the nineteenth century, the traditional lands of Enets changed, and this can easily be seen in Figures 2–3. We provide a map showing the geographic distribution of Enets and their neighbours not only for the period of study (Figure 3), but also for an earlier period (Figure 2). This is important because patterns of multilingualism can be influenced by a situation in the past, and this is partly true of Enets, as will be demonstrated in this paper.

Traditionally, the Enets people lived from hunting and fishing, occasionally herding reindeer, which they used mainly for transport. They were nomadic and regularly encountered more populous neighbouring indigenous groups. The Enets language belongs to the Northern

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subgroup of Samoyedic, and this is in turn a subgroup of Uralic. The other two Northern Samoyedic languages are Nenets and Nganasan, and their speakers have been neighbours of the Enets for centuries, see Figures 2–3. In addition, if one looks at the last two hundred years, the Enets have also been in contact with speakers of Selkup (Southern Samoyedic), speakers of Evenki (Tungusic, Altaic) and speakers of Russian (see Figure 3). Thus, this small language community in a multilingual environment presents an interesting object for sociolinguistic research.

The Enets have two territorial groups, Tundra Enets (located in the north of their territory) and Forest Enets (in the south), as shown in Figures 2–3. These two groups have different self-designations: Tundra Enets call themselves səmatu, and Forest Enets have no specific self-designation, usually using onej entʃiu ‘genuine people’ for themselves as a group. Neighbouring indigenous groups also have different names for the two Enets groups. Notably, Tundra Enets and Forest Enets speak different dialects of Enets, though it is hard to say whether we are dealing here with two dialects of the same language or two languages. According to the lead author’s fieldwork, speakers of Tundra Enets and Forest Enets can easily understand each other if they want to, but they may choose to stress differences between the two groups and claim that they lack mutual comprehension. The Enets people are made up of different clans, and traditionally practiced clan exogamy; this means that Tundra Enets occasionally married Forest Enets and vice versa. Cumulatively, this evidence suggests that sociolinguistic ideologies of sameness and difference are strategically deployed within the Enets community at large, and probably have been able to be strategically deployed in this

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3 In this paper, by Nenets we mean Tundra Nenets and not Forest Nenets. In the period 1850–1950 that we study Enets did not contact with Forest Nenets.

4 By speakers of Russian, we mean Russian speaking newcomers from the European Russia disregarding their heritage ethnic affiliation (e.g. Ukrainians, Tatars, etc.). It is important to remember that their ‘Russian’ could well be not the mainland Standard Russian, but a kind of a Russian-based pidgin govorka (see Stern 2005, Stern 2012; Helimski 2000; Urmanchieva 2010; Gusev 2013). The use of govorka instead of the standard Russian has been documented for Nganasans and Evenkis, but at the moment there is no direct evidence pointing to the Enets’ use of govorka. Since it was not a matter of choice at the individual level, we do not study the issue in this paper (either all Enets spoke govorka instead of the standard Russian, or all Enets used more or less standard Russian, and not the govorka typical of their Nganasan and Evenki neighbours).
manner for some time. In the current study, we will refer to Enets speakers as a whole, noting the differences between the two groups where they are relevant.

Figure 1: Map of modern Russia, the area in the square is expanded in Figures 2–3 (map taken from http://mapsopensource.com, square added by us).
Figure 2: The Enets and neighbouring peoples in the middle of the seventeenth century; map by Yuri Koryakov (http://lingvarium.org), adapted from Dolgikh (1960).
Figure 3. The Enets and neighbouring indigenous peoples: end of the nineteenth century – beginning of the twentieth century; map by Yuri Koryakov (http://lingvarium.org), adapted from Bruk (1961).
3 Methodology and data

This study belongs to the domain of historical sociolinguistics by virtue of its research question and the nature of the data it deals with. It attempts to reconstruct a historical situation that does not exist anymore, and that most of the living Enets do not remember. The first author’s fieldwork with Enets speakers in 2005–2010 awoke an interest in the history of this tiny language community, though did not provide any direct evidence for the historical status and usage patterns of the Enets language. The serendipitous discovery of Enets texts collected by a Soviet anthropologist, Boris Dolgikh, at the end of 1940s turned out to provide the desired evidence, making the current discussion possible.

Dolgikh collected these texts in a local variety of Russian from a total of ten Tundra Enets and two Nganasans who were born between 1885 and 1917, although the majority of the texts were recorded from one Tundra Enets individual born in 1885, Roman Alekseevič Silkin. Dolgikh recorded the stories with pen and paper trying to keep peculiarities of the storytellers’ Russian language, which is an argument for the reliability of these data: the language of the educated anthropologist from European part of Russia was definitely different from what we see in the published texts, so this would suggest that his editing of the contents was rather limited.

The texts were grouped into two volumes, Enets myths and historical legends (Dolgikh 1961) and Everyday Enets stories (Dolgikh 1962b), and published as Working Papers of the Institute of Ethnography of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Both volumes were accompanied by an anthropological introduction and academic commentaries. The first volume provides rich sociological and sociolinguistic information on pre-modern times, while the second volume provides a lot of information about the lives of the story-tellers and of their
elder relatives. Apparently, it was Dolgikh’s own decision what to count as a myth or legend, and what to count as an everyday story, and he based his classification on whether relatives of the informants or their contemporaries figured in a narrative. Both volumes have plentiful comments about the languages used in the communicative events that are represented as taking place between Enets speakers and other indigenous peoples of the region, and sometimes storytellers even comment overtly on the reasons for the reported language choices. As further background, other sources were also consulted: Sorokina and Bolina (2005), Labanauskas (2002), Dolgikh (1962a), Vasil’jev (1963), as well as the texts Andrey Shluinsky and the lead author have recorded in the field.5

Drawing on all the stories in Dolgikh (1961, 1962b), it was possible to create a database of every communicative event that occurred between a member of the wider Enets community and a representative (or representatives) of other ethnic groups, whose native languages were different from Enets.6 In some cases, the language of communication was mentioned by the story-teller, as highlighted in bold in extract (1). In addition, the database also notes all indirect comments about language use, as highlighted in extract (2).

(1) Ca. 1890–1910.

Two Tundra Enets go to the Selkup territory to buy some fish from the Selkup, i.e. to exchange their reindeer for fish. They come to a Selkup camp and enter a tent where a big family lives. The head of the family, an old man, waves to them.

“The old man waves the hand; he [= the Tundra Enets] understood that the old man wanted to say:

- Come, sit with the younger guys in the front corner.

5 The Forest Enets part of our text collection can be viewed at http://larkpie.net/siberianlanguages/recordings/forest-enets
6 We counted only original communicative events excluding repetitions of participants, e.g. if two individuals had a communication earlier in a story, their second communication in the same story was not counted.
They are speaking only in Russian. This guy, the elder son of Sonuko

[= a Tundra Enets clan], does not speak Selkup” (Dolgikh 1962b: 176) \(^7\)

(2) Ca. 1890–1910.

“The shaman was given a seat in the front corner, and the shaman started to howl in Selkup. The Sonuko old man understands nothing” (Dolgikh 1962b: 187). \(^8\)

All interethnic communicative events reported in the first volume of the collection, Dolgikh (1961), and a similar example from Labanauskas (2002) are found in the legends, and they can be analyzed as evidence for the sociolinguistic situation in the area before the middle of the nineteenth century. Dolgikh (1962b) provides evidence for the language choices used from ca. 1850 till ca. 1930. This will be called ‘modern history’ for the purposes of this paper: more specific dates for an interaction were calculated based on the biographies of the storytellers given in Dolgikh (1961, 1962b). The time frame analyzed in this paper is, thus, defined by the time of events reported in the main sources, Dolgikh (1961) and Dolgikh (1962b), and not by reference to external factors, e.g. important events in the history of the Enets people.

Altogether there were fifty-seven interethnic communicative events attested in the sources, twenty-seven in legends and thirty in the 1850–1930 period. The ‘bad data problem’ is relevant to this study no less than to many other studies in historical sociolinguistics (Labov 1972, Labov 1994; Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Cantos 2012: 102–103), though the way it manifests itself is slightly different to the way the problem is discussed in, for instance, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) (but see Tuten and Herrero 2011:

\[\text{«Старик машет рукой; он понял, что старик хочет сказать:}
- Иди, садись к молодым ребятам в передний угол.
По-русски они только говорят. По-остяцки не говорит этот парень, старший сын Сонуко.»}
\[\text{“Посадили шамана на передний угол, и шаман стал вьть по-остяцки. Сонуко-старик ничего не понимает.”}

\(^7\)

\(^8\)
The data from Dolgikh’s collected texts are rich in information about speakers’ age, gender, education, and the social role of most participants. The participants belong to various social ranks, including the quite low one of the main storyteller, and this is specified in the data collected. The medium reported is oral speech, even though the data consists of written records. This is not typical for most historical sociolinguistic data, and we believe it justifies attempting to use the data as fully as possible, notwithstanding that the data is sparsely distributed, and must be interpreted with caution for this reason. A half a hundred communicative events may be the lowest quantitative threshold for reconstructing the actual sociolinguistic picture that existed in the past. Moreover, we must consider the possibility that because Dolgikh collected his texts in Russian, and some time after the events are purported to have taken place, that errors may have crept into the record. The speakers Dolgikh recorded may not accurately remember what language an exchange took place in, and they may fall back on their expectations about language use rather than report exact recollections of actual performance. Similarly, they may have been shaped by Dolgikh’s own expectations or linguistic experiences as well.

These are all real problems of the ‘bad data’ variety that plagues historical sociolinguistics. However, without a time machine that might enable us to return to the period we would like to investigate, it falls to the historical sociolinguist to make the best of what little data might be available (cf. Meyerhoff and Klaere 2017). In this case, the fact that people may be reporting their expectations or stereotypes about language use (rather than actual practice) is not a fatal problem for our analysis. Since we are trying to reconstruct both the practices and the ideologies surrounding multilingualism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the Enets region, we can still work with Dolgikh’s texts. We need to simply acknowledge as an inevitable caveat that what Dolgikh’s storytellers describe may be
framed in terms of language use, but they are simultaneously telling us about language norms and ideologies in the region at that time.

Furthermore, there is an additional reason why we believe that the patterns we will discuss in the next section should be treated as fairly reliable reports of Enets social norms around multilingualism. We are struck by the consistency of the patterns that emerge in the texts, and in particular by the similarity between the historical patterns that can be reconstructed from the texts and the very recent sociolinguistic practices among the Enets (in Section 5 we return to synchronic observations based on the lead author’s fieldwork). This suggests continuity of sociolinguistic values from the past into the present (a point we also return to in the conclusion). A quite similar text-based methodology was used by McLeod (2003) and Stewart (1964), though with a larger number of data points. McLeod (2003) surveyed Scottish Gaelic poetry from the eighteenth to the twentieth century for mentions of use of Gaelic and English, and on the basis of these mentions, he reconstructed attitudes to the two languages and their speakers. Stewart (1964) studied ethnographic notes from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries to reconstruct what languages were used by the inhabitants of the Shetland Islands (UK) and to see how the relative status of the languages changed with time. A recent study on Irish (Doyle 2015) also refers to historic bilingual practices that can be deduced from texts written in the previous centuries.

4 Results of the sociolinguistic reconstruction: Enets in 1850–1930

According to our main sources, Dolgikh (1961, 1962b), representatives of five different peoples were in contact with the Enets from the 1850s to the 1930s: the Nganasans (Nganasan: Uralic, Samoyedic, Northern Samoyedic), the Nenets (Nenets: Uralic, Samoyedic, Northern Samoyedic), the Selkups (Selkup: Uralic, Samoyedic, Southern Samoyedic), the
Evenkis (*Evenki*: Altaic, Tungusic),\(^9\) and Russians (*Russian*: Indo-European, Slavic). Even though our analysis includes interactions with representatives of more than two different ethnic groups, only two-way cases were organized into the following typology, since every three- or four-way interaction was unique in its set of participants. These multiple cases are discussed as additional data after the analysis of all two-party cases.

Table 1 shows that language choice was not overtly commented on for two-way contact between the Enets and the Nganasans. This was mostly also the case for contact between the Enets and Nenets and between the Enets and the Russians. This contrasts with cases where the Enets came into contact with the Evenkis and the Selkups: in these cases the language used for communication was commonly specified, and where there is a lack of such information this seems meaningful. We analyse the two types of cases in Section 4.1 and Section 4.2, in turn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nenets</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Nganasan</th>
<th>Evenki</th>
<th>Selkup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of encounters</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l: 8, m: 9</td>
<td>l: 2,  m: 9</td>
<td>l: 7,  m: 0</td>
<td>l: 7,  m: 1</td>
<td>l: 0,  m: 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of language mentioning</strong></td>
<td>14 l: 5, m: 9</td>
<td>8 l: 2, m: 6</td>
<td>7 l: 7, m: 0</td>
<td>2.5 l: 1.5(^{10}), m: 1</td>
<td>2 l: 0, m: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1. Interethnic communications without comments on language use

It seems that the language choice was considered self-evident for the audience in the cases of Enets-Nenets contact, Enets-Russian contact, and Enets-Nganasan contact, but not in the

\(^9\) A group of Evenki mixed with Yakut (Altaic, Turkic) and formed the basis for a new ethnic group, the Dolgan, in the beginning of the twentieth century. In most cases a common denomination for Evenkis and Dologans is used in the sources, ‘Tungusy’, though in some cases a specific name, ‘Dolgan’, is also used. For this study, we treat them both as Evenkis without further differentiation, as the data on particular Dologans are very scarce.

\(^{10}\) A "0.5" value is assigned to cases with unclear language choice: the two alternative variants are each given a "0.5" value.
cases of Enets-Evenki contact and Enets-Selkup contact. The rest of this section will show that such a division of contact groups into two categories, where the language choice was more or less predictable (Nenets, Russians, Nganasans), and where it was not (Evenkis, Selkups), is supported by sociohistoric data. A description of each contact group is provided below.

The Nganasans have been eastern neighbours of the Enets for at least several centuries, or even longer, as indicated in Figures 2–3. They often dwelled on the same grounds and had common households with the Enets. Nganasans and Enets could intermarry (Dolgikh 1962a), while the Nganasans did not marry representatives of any other ethnic groups. As a result, it was not unusual for Enets and Nganasans to live in the same tent and/or to have common relatives. Such close contact must clearly have favoured acquisition of Nganasan by Enets children and of Enets by Nganasan children from an early age. The common background of the Enets and the Nganasans is also reflected in some of the historical sociolinguistic data. First, in the Russian used by the storytellers in Dolgikh (1961, 1962b), the Enets and the Nganasans are both referred to as samoyed/samodi (although they do have their own denominations as well, tau for the Nganasans and several specific names for the Enets, depending on their clan). Second, Tundra Enets consultants informed one of the authors that in Dolgan both the Enets and the Nganasans can be referred to as kharyj.

The Nenets have been close neighbours of all the Enets groups more recently (Figures 2 and 3). In the seventeenth century, there were only war-like contacts between the Nenets and the Enets, while in the eighteenth century the Nenets started to live on the traditional Enets lands, on the western bank of the Yenisey river, with more peaceful interactions.

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11 The Nganasans are divided into western Avam Nganasans and eastern Vadey Nganasans, only the former and not the latter had intensive contact with Enets.
12 Cf. hâmaj ‘Nganasan’ in a Dolgan dictionary (Stachowski 1993: 99).
13 The Nenets were always western neighbours of Enets in a purely geographic sense, but in the previous centuries there were few peaceful contacts with the Nenets.
14 For example, Dolgikh (1962a) presupposes that the Nenets used to be traditional enemies of the Nganasans and the Enets.
reported. Later, in the nineteenth century, they also settled on the other part of the traditional Enets lands, the eastern bank of the Yenisey river (see also Helimski 1996, Helimski 2000: 37). Since then the same situation of intermarriages and common households has been attested for these western Enets neighbours as with the Nganasans (Dolgikh 1962a), and this has also created conditions favouring early acquisition of both languages by children. This is supported by observations in Siegl (2013: 36) who observes that until recently the Forest Enets were bilingual in Nenets. The only difference between the contact situation with the Enets and with the Nganasans is that the intensive contact between the Enets and the Nenets is a more recent phenomenon, starting in the nineteenth century (compared to longer intensive contact with the Nganasans).

Russian colonizers appeared in the area in the seventeenth century, and in the middle of the nineteenth century it was still uncommon for Enets to have contact with Russians. The Russians that were in the region were either peasants or merchants living in small villages that consisted of only a few houses, or merchants who travelled in the area by ship for commercial purposes. Extract 3 shows that the Russians living in the villages are reported as speaking local languages in the middle of the nineteenth century, though this norm seemed to be in abeyance by the beginning of the twentieth century.

(3) ca. middle of the nineteenth century

“…They also lived here, across the river from Vorontsovo. At that time there were no villages, just peasants. <These peasants> were normal people, spoke Tundra Enets and Forest Enets, no one spoke Nenets then.” (Dolgikh 1962b: 126)\(^{15}\)

Some Enets were still ignorant of Russian communication norms by the end of the nineteenth century (as shown in extract 4), though cases of Enets following Russian tradition and

\(^{15}\) «…Они жили тожно здесь против Воронцова. Тоже не было никаких деревень, а были крестьяне. Люди как люди, знали по-самоедски и по-карасински, по-юрацки тогда не знали.»
shaking hands are also reported (e.g. Dolgikh 1962b: 180). Some Enets could speak some Russian by this time, but three explicit textual remarks of someone being able to speak Russian at the turn of the century suggest this was not the default situation for most Enets (Dolgikh 1962b: 10, 23, 86). The usual practice by which Russians lived in villages and Enets lived in the tundra meant that it would have required an effort for Enets to acquire Russian. Only those with enough regular exposure would have learnt Russian.

(4) ca. 1880–1900.

At the end of a commercial negotiation between a Russian merchant and an Enets clan chief:

“Russian: And so, my friend, you are already leaving and do not want to say goodbye?
Clan chief: I do not know what it means ‘to say goodbye’.

Russian: ‘To say goodbye’ is to say ‘goodbye’, when you leave; and by an encounter, you should say hello.

Clan chief: OK, remain here, goodbye!

And gave his hand.” (Dolgikh 1962b: 119)\(^\text{16}\)

As for the Evenkis and the Selkups, the Enets had regular contact with these peoples (Figures 2–3), though they were not their close neighbours: in fact, geographically, the Selkups were not neighbours at all by the end of the nineteenth century. The Evenkis had always been direct south-eastern neighbours of the Enets, but contacts with them were only sporadic. While the Nganasans and the Nenets are closely related to the Enets (and all speak Northern Samoyedic languages), the Selkups are more distantly related (and speak a Southern Samoyedic

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\(^{16}\) «Русский: Что, друг, ушли уже и прощаться не хотите?
Князь: Что такое «прощаться», я не знаю.
Князь: Ну, ладно, оставайся, прощай!
И руку дал.»
language), while the Evenkis are not related to the Enets at all (and speak a Tungusic language).

Contacts with Selkups could be trade based, or they could simply be occasional encounters on adjacent lands. Dolgikh (1962a) describes the ethnic affiliation for all Nganasan and Enets married couples in 1926 (he also provides a lot of additional data for before and after this year), and not a single marriage with Selkups is mentioned for the Enets; only three marriages with Dolgans/Evenkis are mentioned. A Selkup is mentioned in Dolgikh (1962b: 46) as living near Enets tents; another Selkup in our database was in fact originally from a Nenets family, but he was brought up by his Selkup maternal grandfather after the death of his father.

With Evenkis, some sporadic contacts were similar in nature to those with the Selkups, however many other contacts were war-like. Traditionally, the Enets considered the Evenkis to have a martial spirit, and the Evenkis were known as being accustomed to stealing Enets women. A number of stories in Dolgikh (1961) concern Evenkis stealing Enets women and Enets men going to Evenki lands to find and return them.

It is clear, therefore, that if Evenki or Selkup were acquired by the Enets, this happened later in life, and this acquisition required particular conditions for it, i.e. it was not readily acquired through regular or harmonious contact (as with Nganasan). For example, when an Enets speaker uses his excellent proficiency in Evenki to disguise himself as an Evenki, the storyteller comments: “I do not know whether it was his father who taught him, but he could speak Evenki very well” (Dolgikh 1961: 158). This shows us two things: first, that an Enets who was able to speak Evenki was something that needed to be accounted for, and second, that successful (good) language acquisition was assumed to be due to intimate or familial
contact with an outgroup speaker. Not all Enets had enough exposure to Evenki or Selkup to acquire these languages.\textsuperscript{17}

This overview of the ethnic groups that the Enets had contact with makes it clear that details of interactions with Nganasans were for the storytellers much more predictable than with other peoples. Encounters with Nganasans are mentioned in legends only, and the usual audience for legends, i.e. other representatives of the Enets community (and not an outsider anthropologist), surely could be assumed to know the sociolinguistic background perfectly. In addition, since language choice is never mentioned, this suggests that understanding between an Enets and a Nganasan was never a problem. Dolgikh (1961: 160) retells an episode of an Enets man and two Nganasan women speaking to each other in an Evenki camp: they are said to talk to each other ‘in their own language, not in Evenki’,\textsuperscript{18} as if they had one and the same native language. Enets and Nganasan are not mutually intelligible, so such wording may suggest that Enets and Nganasans always understood each other, and so they had a common language from the perspective of the Evenki. At the same time, we know that in the second half of the twentieth century all Tundra Enets elders could speak Nganasan, and most Nganasan elders of the area could speak Tundra Enets (Helimski 1998: 481, Eugen Helimski p.c., and this was supported by the lead author’s fieldwork experience). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Enets-Nganasan bilingualism was a common characteristic of both the Enets and the Nganasans in the earlier period too.\textsuperscript{19} The lack of textual information on language used in Enets-Nganasan contacts in combination with the evidence pointing to widespread bilingualism further suggests that choice of language in Enets-Nganasan communication

\textsuperscript{17} Dolgikh (1970: 214) reports that in the 1920s–1930s his Enets and Nenets consultants remembered all Enets of the baj clan (originally, a Forest Enets clan, a part of which later joined the Tundra Enets and switched to Tundra Enets) as freely speaking Evenki (besides their native Forest Enets) in the past. There are no traces of this pervasive Evenki bilingualism among the Enets in the data we analyzed for this paper.

\textsuperscript{18} «На своем языке, не тунгусском»

\textsuperscript{19} Note that most Enets-Nganasan contacts in Dolgikh’s texts and the Enets-Nganasan bilingualism in the modern times are characteristic for the Tundra Enets and not for the Forest Enets. The latter lived further from the traditional Nganasan lands, and so had fewer contacts with the Nganasans. The Nenets, in contrast, were common neighbours both for the Tundra Enets and the Forest Enets.
probably did not have any particular social load or index any particular sociolinguistic identities.

The Nenets and the Russians were two other groups that had lived near the Enets for some time by the time Dolgikh recorded his stories (see Figures 2–3 for Nenets). In a pattern similar to the situation with Nganasan, in the second half of the twentieth century most Enets elders could speak Nenets (Vasil’jev 1963; Eugen Helimski p.c., the lead author’s fieldwork experience). Hence, it seems reasonable to project Enets-Nenets bilingualism among the Enets also back to for an earlier stage in the history of the community. This extrapolation to the past must, however, be done with caution since, as already mentioned, the expansion of the Nenets people that we observe today appears to be relatively recent. Interestingly, there is some evidence that until the middle of the nineteenth century a Nenets dialect called Yurats, which was much closer to Enets than the modern local dialect of Tundra Nenets is, was spoken in the area (Helimski 1976). Unfortunately, the only data from Yurats is a wordlist with little more than 250 words (Helimski 1976). While Nenets and Enets are mutually unintelligible languages, this wordlist suggests that Enets and Yurats were very similar. So it may have been the case that communication between the Enets and the Nenets was possible to some extent with each party speaking their own language (cf. Thije and Zeevaert [2007] for data on receptive bilingualism for speakers of closely related languages, and Sankoff [2015] on such receptive bilingualism defining a speech community). Similar to the episode with Nganasans mentioned above, in one of the legends an Enets man speaks to a Nenets women captured by Evenkis, and the two of them are said ‘to talk in their own language’ to each other, as if they had one and the same native language (Dolgikh 1961: 162). The same wording could, however, be used if their languages were very close to each other and could be seen as one language as opposed to Evenki.

20 Yurak is a word in Dolgikh’s Russian used to denote a Nenets.
21 «СВОИМ ЯЗЫКОМ БУДЕМ ГОВОРИТЬ»
In five stories in the legends, when the language is not mentioned, four are short conversations between an Enets and a Nenets (Dolgikh 1961: 91, 92–93, 95, 195). In six cases, when the language is mentioned (including both legend data and modern history), five are rather lengthy interactions. At the same time, there are nine cases from modern history when the language of an Enets-Nenets interaction is not mentioned, and six of these interactions are long and would probably have required one party to speak the language of the other. Summing up, until the middle of the nineteenth century, interactions between the Enets and the Nenets could probably have taken place with each speaker using their own home language, in particular when an interaction period was comparatively short. The length of an interaction only appears to be a relevant variable when the two languages are close enough to be mutually intelligible. However, with the loss of Yurats, the local dialect of Nenets, it seems likely that there was a shift to Enets-Nenets bilingualism, a pattern that we see in the second half of the twentieth century.

Of the eight Enets-Russian encounters that were reported by the storytellers without specifying which language is used, seven took place in the local Russian town Dudinka or in Russian villages (see Figure 3 for their exact locations). In all of them, the Enets person was seeking something from the Russian(s), so in this sense, we can say that the Russian party was the more powerful, and not vice versa. We know from other episodes in the texts that in six instances, the Enets people interacting with the Russians could speak some Russian. Given this broader macrosociolinguistic context and the individual case histories, the use of Russian can be strongly presupposed in these situations.

4.2 Interethnic communications with comments on language use
We now turn to all the cases in Table 1 when language choice was overtly commented on. The majority of Enets-Evenki and Enets-Selkup encounters, as well as some Enets-Nenets and Enets-Russian encounters, fall into this category.

Each of the cases of interethnic communication where a language choice is commented on was further coded for contextual social power. Power is defined here as the ability to withhold or bestow something tangible or intangible: in each case of contact, we code for the power parameter depending on the larger context. If no party aspires to anything possessed by the other party, the contextual social power will be assumed to belong to the speaker who initiates the conversation. This is not an ad hoc stipulation: we draw on interactional sociolinguistics and conversation analysis and the notion of preferred and dispreferred moves in dialogic exchange. If an interlocutor initiates a conversation or speech act, the preferred move is for the other interlocutor or interlocutors to respond and engage (not withdraw or ignore). Hence, in terms of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) classic intercultural approach to politeness, the person opening the conversation creates a context that inherently threatens an interlocutor’s negative face wants, i.e. the expectation of a response interferes with the interlocutor’s right to act unimpeded. In addition, an interactional move initiated in one language prefers an accommodative response in that language (assuming a bilingual addressee) or in some other known, shared language. The practical implications of this in terms of how we have coded for social power lies in the fact that initiating the conversation entails some exercise of power (setting up the interlocutor for an accommodative reply) but it seems to be a weaker force than the ability to withhold or bestow something that is expected or desired. In other words, when a selected interlocutor chooses not to accommodate or converge in their response to the initiating speaker, this overrides the initial speaker’s choice of the language of communication.
Table 2 gives a summary of all sixteen cases of contact where the language was clearly specified. For ease of presentation, citations in ‘Dolgikh’ are shown as ‘D’ and ‘Labanauskas’ as ‘L’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Ethnic group, time period</th>
<th>Language used</th>
<th>Who possesses something aspired by the other?</th>
<th>Who starts the conversation?</th>
<th>What part of the communication was in this language?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the tundra, a poor Enets meets a Nenets (working as a hired labour by a rich Nenets), they get acquainted. This Nenets’ mother is Enets, later they discover that their mothers are sisters.</td>
<td>D1961:192</td>
<td>Nenets legend</td>
<td>Nenets</td>
<td>Nenets</td>
<td>Enets</td>
<td>unclear22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Enets is looking for his reindeer and finds a Nenets tent (the Nenets have got lost), they start living together.</td>
<td>D1961:229</td>
<td>Nenets legend</td>
<td>Nenets</td>
<td>no-one</td>
<td>Nenets</td>
<td>unclear23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Russian ship arrives at an Enets camp, Russians speak to the clan chief who can speak Russian.</td>
<td>D1962b:117</td>
<td>Russian modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian sailors offer some food to an Enets boy and ask him questions about himself (later he comments, his Russian was not perfect at that time).</td>
<td>D1962b:9–10</td>
<td>Russian modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Russian invites an Enets boy to live with them.</td>
<td>D1962b:23</td>
<td>Russian modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Enets goes to an Evenki camp to release his captured wife. In interactions with Evenki hired labourers he pretends he is a poor Evenki hired by the master.</td>
<td>L2002:162</td>
<td>Evenki legend</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Enets pretends he is an Evenki – he has killed an Evenki, took his clothes and enters an Evenki tent where he speaks with an old lady.</td>
<td>D1961:158</td>
<td>Evenki legend</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Enets have killed an Evenki domesticated reindeer and come to the Evenki tent for negotiations.</td>
<td>D1961:110</td>
<td>Evenki legend</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>maybe some gestures, some Evenki (but not good Evenki, not good Enets, as</td>
<td>Evenki</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Two phrases in their conversations (one by an Enets, one by a Nenets) are introduced by remarks that the speaker speaks Nenets.
23 The language is said to be Nenets only in the middle of the conversation, so this could signal a change of the language used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two <strong>Enets</strong> killed all <strong>Evenki</strong>, then enter an Evenki tent with elders and children. An Evenki asks them not to kill them.</th>
<th>D1961:103</th>
<th>Evenki legend</th>
<th>Enets</th>
<th>Enets</th>
<th>Evenki</th>
<th>all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A couple of <strong>Enets</strong> go to some <strong>Selkups</strong> to buy some fish in winter.</td>
<td>D1962b:176</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Russian (&quot;because the Enets does not speak Selkup&quot;)</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An <strong>Enets</strong> asks a <strong>Selkup</strong> for advice about village life</td>
<td>D1962b:25</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>Selkup</strong> comes to ask for some reindeer from an <strong>Enets</strong>, is refused, puts an evil curse on his son. The Selkup is brought up by his Selkup grandfather and does not speak Enets.</td>
<td>D1962b:183–188</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(continuation of the above) The <strong>Enets</strong> comes to the <strong>Selkup</strong>'s tent to ask him to return and heal him.</td>
<td>D1962b:183–188</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>Enets</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(continuation of the above) The <strong>Selkup</strong> comes to the Enets tent to heal the <strong>Enets</strong>' son (the Selkup sings shaman songs in Selkup)</td>
<td>D1962b:183–188</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This <strong>Selkup</strong> lives with an <strong>Enets</strong> in one tent, the Enets helps him with shaman procedures.</td>
<td>D1962b:183–188</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>Selkup</strong> serves as a matchmaker for an <strong>Enets</strong>, and he has just finished talking to a Nenets family that has a suitable girl.</td>
<td>D1962b:46</td>
<td>Selkup modern history</td>
<td>Nenets, Enets</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>Selkup</td>
<td>seems: Nenets – just two words, other in Enets (but not sure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It turns out that the contextual social power can explain the choice of the language in 15 out of 16 cases of interethnic communication (the outlier case will be discussed below). In Table 2, the cells with the parameter conditioning the language choice in this contact are shown in grey.

These results can be analyzed as a case of asymmetrical convergence as it is understood in the accommodation literature (among others, Giles 1973; Gallois et al. 1995; Trudgill 1983), with the parameter determining the direction of convergence being contextual social power. In the multiethnic setting under study, speakers appear to use the interlocutor’s language if this could bring them some advantage (cf. the use of accommodation theory for the analysis of interethnic communication in Giles et al. 1977).

Note that in all Enets-Selkup encounters, when the use of Selkup is expected because the Selkup speaker has something that the Enets speaker might aspire for, we see instead the use of Russian. In one such case the storyteller feels obliged to explain the language choice: since the Enets could not speak Selkup, he explains, Russian was used (Dolgikh 1962b: 176). Such an explanation is informative in two respects: first, it strongly suggests that the Enets speaker, and not the Selkup speaker, was expected to accommodate to his interlocutor in his language choice. If this were not the case, we would expect the storyteller to note whether the Selkup could speak Enets or not, and this is not noted. Secondly, it is also informative because it implicates that the norm at the time would have been for the Enets speakers to use the other group’s home language, but that in the case of interactions with Selkups, Russian could be used instead. There was extensive contact between the Russians and the Selkups from as early as the turn of the sixteenth – seventeenth centuries, when two forts and a town were built in Selkup lands (e.g. Helimski 1996, 2000: 36–39). This meant that there was a good deal of Selkup-Russian bilingualism in the Selkup community for a long time before Dolgikh’s texts were collected. We assume then that the Enets speaker in this modern history
might have seen Russian as a reasonable choice for a lingua franca, given that he could not conform to the default practice of using his interlocutor’s ethnolect, Selkup, to make his request.

The exceptional case in Table 2 is the last one listed: a Selkup serving as a matchmaker to pair a young Enets man to a woman in a Nenets family. When this Selkup speaker talks to the Enets, he uses Nenets, at least for the first two words. The unusual choice of an outgroup language, neither Selkup/Russian, nor Enets, can be explained by the fact that this communicative event takes place immediately after the the Selkup has concluded negotiations with the Nenets family. Given the wider sociolinguistic norms that we have already seen governing language choice when requesting something of someone, the Selkup negotiator would have used Nenets with the Nenets family to conduct his negotiation for the bride being sought by the Enets man. The subsequent switch to the Enets language referred to in Table 2 is unclear from the text, but would be consistent with broad patterns of accommodation seen in the other examples.

4.3. Notes on language use in other types of interethnic communications

Finally there are some encounters with representatives of more than two different ethnic groups. Four of them are reported in texts: Enets-Nganasan-Dolgan-Evenki (Dolgikh 1961: 89), Enets-Nenets-Nganasan (Dolgikh 1961: 151), Enets-Evenki-Nganasan (Dolgikh 1961: 211), Enets-Nenets-Dolgan (Dolgikh 1962b: 85–86). In none of the them is language choice mentioned. Assuming that the same norms we have discussed above guide the storyteller in choosing whether to comment overtly on language choice, it seems likely that the presence of a third party had no effect. In these cases, it seems to us very likely that the interaction was treated as a (sociolinguistically) unproblematic instance of Enets-Nganasan or Enets-Nenets
interaction, that is, the participants probably continued to use their own home language when talking to each other.

A final remark can be made on the use of Russian among Enets and other indigenous peoples of the area. There are three cases when Russian is used in the modern history texts when matters pertaining to the law are discussed. Once this is a discussion between Enets, Nenets and Dolgan people (Dolgikh 1962b: 85–86); two other cases represent discussions where only Enets participate, i.e. there is no-one from another ethnolinguistic group, but the speakers still use some Russian because of the topic (Dolgikh 1962b: 52, 93). The location of the encounter could also play a role: one of the law discussions takes place in the Russian town, while another is a case when two Enets start talking to each other in Russian when they met in a Russian house of a Russian village (Dolgikh 1962b: 34).

5 Summary of the sociolinguistic reconstruction and the Enets multilingualism today

To conclude, we summarize the patterns of Enets multilingualism that we have reconstructed and will briefly review the development of the linguistic practices of the Enets from the end of the historic period studied to today.

At the start of the period studied, in the 1850s, the Enets linguistic community could be characterized as multilingual in the following five languages: Enets, Nganasan, Nenets, Evenki, and Russian (Figure 4). The number of Enets individuals who were able to converse in each of the other four languages differed and generally was a property of the individuals who had regular social contact with speakers of the other four languages. Nganasan and Nenets seem to have been resources that were used by any Enets interacting with members of the Nenets and Nganasan community living nearby; equally, Nganasans and Nenets living nearby could use Enets.\textsuperscript{24} Evenki and Russian could be used by Enets people in interactions

\textsuperscript{24} In this paper, we have not analyzed how many Enets spoke Nenets and Nganasan at once (we have too little data). Our general impression from the data is that there were Enets who lived close to the Nenets and they spoke...
with Evenkis and Selkups and Russians, but use of these languages seems to have been triggered only when the other party had the greater social power in the situation being portrayed. In other contexts, Enets would continue to use their own language, Enets.

Figure 4. Languages used by the Enets since 1850 and change in their status with time (top down: time line; left to right: languages used by the Enets)

Nenets, and there were other Enets, who lived close to the Nganasans, and they spoke Nganasan, and there were a few Enets who lived close both to the Nenets and the Nganasans and they spoke both Nenets and Nganasan.
Note that in all cases of interethnic communication there could well be a lack of perfect proficiency in a language for which the multilingualism is ascribed to the Enets community or Enets individuals: as Braunmüller and Ferraresi (2003: 3) put it: “Nobody would ever have expected to know other languages ‘perfectly’ (whatever that may mean in detail). This expectation seems to be a quite modern idea when discussing issues of bilingualism or multilingualism in general”.

Later on, the use of Russian started to become more and more common in interactions, including among the Enets themselves. This started in physical or topical domains marked as Russian, e.g. if the exchange took place in a Russian settlement or was devoted to a discussion of the law.

After the end of the period reconstructed through the texts, i.e. after the 1930s, a series of events destroyed the patterns of local multilingualism and accelerated the spread of Russian as a language of intercultural communication. These were, first, the migration of a large group of Tundra Enets to the east, to the traditional Nganasan lands (at the end of the 1930s), where the villages of Ust-Avam and Volochanka are shown in Figure 3. Second, Stalin’s mass deportation of Volga Germans and peoples from the former independent Baltic countries into the Forest Enets area (this occurred during the 1940s through to the beginning of the 1950s). Third, the state-governed translocation of a large number of reindeer from the Yamal peninsula to the Forest Enets area. Along with the reindeer, reindeer herders were relocated into the region, these were Nenets and Komi (Uralic, Finno-Ugric) speakers. In the 1950s, Dolgan (Altaic, Turkic) reindeer herders weree sent to the area to help manage the suddenly increased flock. Finally, from the late 1950s to the early 1960s there was the administrative integration of small villages of the area. Hitherto, villages had often consisted of no more than several households, but at this point they were grouped into bigger villages.
with dozens of households (for more details specifically on the Forest Enets, see Siegl 2013: 47–57).

All of these events drastically diminished the number of Enets in their traditional lands relative to other ethnic groups. The programme of collectivization (successfully enacted by the 1940s) ruined traditional ways of living, and this, combined with the administrative pressure on all native Siberians to stop using their languages when they were schooled in the state boarding schools that were omnipresent and obligatory from the early 1950s, led initially to a period of Enets-Russian diglossia in the 1960s. During this period Enets was used in the family and during traditional activities such as fishing and reindeer herding, and Russian was used in all other domains and activities. Ultimately, this led to wholesale language shift in the 1980s. Today no-one born after the 1960s claims to be able to speak Enets or to fully understand the recordings of their own parents.25 The remaining three dozen or so Enets who were born in or before the 1960s can speak Enets, but even they do not use the language on an everyday basis anymore. All modern Enets are native speakers of Russian today, although for some individuals, their Russian can be quite far from the literary standard. Today most of Enets live settled in two villages on the right bank of the Yenisey River (in the villages of Potapovo and Vorontsovo), with some Tundra Enets families dwelling in the Tukhard tundra with Tundra Nenets and some descendants of the Tundra Enets living in Ust-Avam and Volochanka with Nganasans and Dolgans (see Figure 3 for the locations of the villages mentioned).

The lead author’s fieldwork data suggest that the remaining speakers of Enets until recently manifested more or less the same patterns of multilingualism that this paper has been able to reconstruct for the past. The older, living Enets speakers who the lead author has worked with can recall their own sociolinguistic practices from when they were younger,

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25 Having said this, we still know little about how exactly the languages were used in the period from the early 1930s till the 1950s, and this is the lead author’s current research in progress.
lived in the tundra, and spoke Enets to each other. Today’s younger Enets are all monolingual in Russian, but likewise they can recall what their parents and grandparents used to do until a couple of decades ago, before the shift to Russian was complete. The self-reports and reports of family memories converge with the patterns we have reconstructed from Dolgikh: those Enets who lived near Nenets could speak Nenets, those Enets who lived near Nganasans could speak Nganasan, and most Forest Enets understood some Evenki and/or Dolgan. Sadly, today interethnic interactions do not take place in these languages, as Russian has replaced them all as a universal lingua franca, but modern Enets speakers remember the norms and ideologies about reciprocal and asymmetrical bilingualism in the four neighbouring languages. The norms and ideologies that can be discerned in the historical record seem to have persisted well into living memory.

This speaks to the remarkable strength of community-based norms surrounding multilingualism. In this instance, we have combined historical sociolinguistic data with evidence from modern fieldwork. These methods point to the same multilingual practices having existed 100 years ago in the anthropological record as are reported in the living memory of members of the Enets community today. This provides strong evidence that the reconstruction of sociolinguistic attitudes and practices is reliable. Perhaps even more importantly, it demonstrates that otherwise scant historical data or suspect personal memories together transcend the limitations of the ‘bad data’ problem in historical sociolinguistics. Furthermore, when considered together, they suggest that language attitudes may persist unchanged even when the linguistic skills needed to sustain them are undergoing rapid change.

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