

# Cross-linguistic Studies on Samoyedic Languages

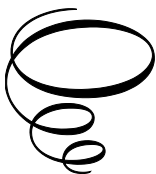


# Cross-linguistic Studies on Samoyedic Languages

By

Beáta Wagner-Nagy and Josefina Budzisch

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables.....	x
Preface.....	xi
Symbols and Abbreviations.....	xiii
Abbreviations of Languages.....	xv
Chapter 1 .....	1
Introduction	
1.1 Tundra and Forest Nenets	
1.2 Tundra and Forest Enets	
1.3 Nganasan	
1.4 Selkup	
1.5 Kamas	
1.6 Mator	
1.7 Historical context	
1.8 Documentation and data used in this study	
1.8.1 Nenets	
1.8.2 Enets	
1.8.3 Nganasan	
1.8.4 Selkup	
1.8.5 Kamas	
1.8.6 Mator	
1.9 Writing and glossing conventions in this volume	
Chapter 2 .....	34
Sounds and Sounds Systems	
2.1 Consonants and their distribution	
2.1.1 Nenets	
2.1.2 Enets	
2.1.3 Nganasan	
2.1.4 Selkup	

2.1.5 Kamas	
2.1.6 Mator	
2.1.7 Summary	
2.2 Vowels	
2.2.1 Nenets	
2.2.2 Enets	
2.2.3 Nganasan	
2.2.4 Selkup	
2.2.5 Kamas	
2.2.6 Mator	
2.2.7 Summary	
2.3 Syllables	
2.3.1 Nenets	
2.3.2 Enets	
2.3.3 Nganasan	
2.3.4 Selkup	
2.3.5 Kamas	
2.3.6 Mator	
2.3.7 Summary	
Chapter 3 .....	74
Topics from Morphophonology	
3.1 Suffix alternation versus vowel harmony	
3.2 Consonant gradation	
3.2.1 Nganasan	
3.2.2 Selkup	
3.3 Nasal ~ stop alternation in Selkup	
3.4 Long-distance assimilation of stops in Selkup	
Chapter 4 .....	88
Number Marking	
4.1 General number	
4.2 Singulatives, minimal unit and measure words	
4.3 Dual marking	
4.4 Plural marking	
4.5 Collective meaning	
4.6 Associative dual, plural, and dyadic constructions	
4.7 Number marking on personal pronouns	
4.8 Summary	

Chapter 5 .....	122
Case Marking	
5.1 The nominal case systems	
5.1.1 Nominative and accusative case	
5.1.2 Genitive	
5.1.3 Local cases	
5.1.3.1 Lative and allative	
5.1.3.2 Locative	
5.1.3.3 Elative/ablative	
5.1.3.4 Adessive	
5.1.3.5 Prolative	
5.1.4 Instrumental	
5.1.5 Translative / essive	
5.1.6 Equative	
5.1.7 Summary	
5.2 Adjectivized case suffixes in Selkup	
5.3 The adverbial case markers	
5.4 Destinative declension	
5.5 Case marking on personal pronouns	
Chapter 6 .....	172
Numeral Systems	
6.1 Numerals from ‘one’ to ‘ten’	
6.2 Numerals from ‘eleven’ to ‘nineteen’	
6.3 The numerals above ‘twenty’	
6.4 Summary	
Chapter 7 .....	186
Desiderative, Auxiliaries, and Expressions of Becoming	
7.1 Desiderative constructions	
7.2 Auxiliary constructions	
7.2.1 Aspectual auxiliary constructions	
7.2.2 Other auxiliary constructions	
7.3 Expression of becoming	
Chapter 8 .....	214
To Fill in the Holes: Placeholders	

Chapter 9 .....	219
Locative Predication and Existential Constructions	
9.1 Forest and Tundra Nenets	
9.2 Forest and Tundra Enets	
9.3 Nganasan	
9.4 Selkup	
9.5 Kamas and Mator	
9.6 Summary	
Chapter 10 .....	240
Expressions of Possessivity	
10.1 Adnominal possession	
10.2 Proprietary phrases	
10.3 Predicative possession	
10.3.1 Action Schema	
10.3.2 Genitive Schema	
10.3.3 Topic Schema	
10.3.4 Location Schema	
10.4 Summary	
Chapter 11 .....	259
Non-Verbal Predication	
11.1 Predicate nominals	
11.2 Predicate adjectives	
11.3 Summary	
Corpora	
Enets	
Kamas	
Nenets	
Nganasan	
Selkup	
Corpora .....	273
References .....	275
Index .....	299

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1	The Samoyed language area
Figure 1-2	Current residence of Nenets people
Figure 1-3.	Current residence of Enets
Figure 1-4.	Current residence of Nganasan
Figure 1-5.	Current residence of Selkup
Figure 1-6	Residence of Mator and Kamas
Figure 1-7	Conventional taxonomy of the Samoyedic language
Figure 1-8	Helimski's taxonomy from 1982
Figure 1-9	Janhunen's alternative genetic relations
Figure 1-10	Helimski's alternative genetic relations
Figure 5-1	The occurrence of instrumental suffixes, in items per million

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1	The dialectal distribution of the Nenets varieties
Table 1-2	Dialectal groups and dialects of Selkup
Table 2-1	Consonants in Tundra Nenets (Bolshaya Zemlya dialect)
Table 2-2	The consonant phonemes of the Forest Nenets
Table 2-3	The consonant phonemes of Forest and Tundra Enets
Table 2-4	The consonant phonemes of Nganasan
Table 2-5	The consonant phonemes of the Middle Taz dialect
Table 2-6	The consonant phonemes of Kamas
Table 2-7	The consonant phonemes of Mator
Table 2-8	The vowel phonemes of the Tundra Nenets
Table 2-9	The vowel phonemes of the Forest Nenets
Table 2-10	The vowel phonemes of the Forest Enets
Table 2-11	The vowel phonemes of the Tundra Enets
Table 2-12	The vowel phonemes of the Nganasan
Table 2-13	The vowel phonemes of the Middle Taz dialect
Table 2-14	The vowel phonemes of the Tym dialect
Table 2-15	The vowel system of the Ket Selkup dialects
Table 2-16	The vowel phonemes of Kamas
Table 2-17	The vowel phonemes of Mator
Table 4-1	Dual markers
Table 4-2	Plural markers
Table 4-3	Personal pronouns (Northern Samoyedic languages)
Table 4-4	Personal pronouns (Southern Samoyedic languages)
Table 4-5	Number marking in Samoyedic languages
Table 5-1	Participants marking in comitative and instrumental constructions
Table 5-2	The accusative form of personal pronouns in Northern Samoyedic
Table 5-3	The accusative form of personal pronouns in Southern Samoyedic
Table 5-4	The genitive form of the personal pronouns
Table 5-5	Locational forms of the pronouns in Kamas
Table 7-1	Aspect suffixes
Table 7-2	Aspectual auxiliaries in Mator
Table 7-3	Constructions expressing the concept of ‘becoming’
Table 10-1	Predicative possessive constructions

## PREFACE

Looking at the title of this book, readers may wonder what it covers. To clarify, this book does not present a descriptive grammar of the six Samoyedic languages side by side, nor does it provide a comprehensive historical-comparative grammar of these languages. Readers expecting a complete grammar of the Samoyedic languages in a single volume will be disappointed. However, those with an interest in Samoyedic languages and a typological-comparative perspective will find valuable insights. Rather than covering every aspect of these languages, we focus on intriguing and distinctive phenomena, offering a targeted exploration of their linguistic diversity. This book aims to contribute to the broader field of linguistic typology by highlighting unique features of Samoyedic languages, which remain underrepresented in comparative linguistic research. The analysis is data-driven, utilizing materials from various sources, including corpora, grammars, chrestomathies, and other relevant research. Wherever possible, we have relied on primary data and direct corpus analysis. However, in cases where primary sources were unavailable, we have carefully evaluated secondary sources to ensure accuracy and consistency. For those wishing to delve deeper into specific topics, we provide references to additional literature throughout the text.

The introductory chapter includes several maps, which are taken from the work of Rantanen et al. 2022. These maps are used under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

This book is primarily intended for linguists with an interest in typology and language variation. However, it may also appeal to scholars in related fields, such as anthropology and history, who seek to understand the Samoyedic languages and their cultural context. The chapters are thematically organized, each addressing a specific linguistic aspect. While they follow a logical structure, they are designed to be read independently, allowing readers to focus on particular topics of interest. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on historical linguistics, our approach is centered on synchronic variation and structural diversity, making this book particularly relevant for typologists and comparative linguists. Naturally, several areas of interest to both typologists and scholars of Samoyedic

languages are not covered in this book. One such area is negation, which has already been addressed in several studies and is therefore not discussed here (see, e.g., Wagner-Nagy 2011; Miestamo et al. 2015). Similarly, we do not examine syntactic issues. A more detailed description of subordinate clauses can be found in a recent volume edited by Behnke, and Wagner-Nagy (2023).

While we use abbreviations from the Leipzig Glossing Rules whenever available, these have been supplemented with numerous additional abbreviations. A full list of abbreviations can be found in the corresponding section. Furthermore, glosses and translations from data sources, particularly corpora, were not always adopted verbatim but were standardized and corrected where necessary.

Metadata for corpus examples are structured as follows: *MVL\_080304\_NjomuKemleguNy\_flks*. If the date of collection is unknown, it is marked *XX*, as *KTD\_XX\_MyLife\_nar*. Examples coded as [XYZ, year] are elicited data, e.g., VMI, 2008.

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Given the complexity and diversity of Samoyedic languages, we acknowledge that many aspects remain to be explored. We hope this book serves as a foundation for further research and encourages more in-depth investigations into these languages.

## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Morpheme boundaries for both affixes and clitics are indicated by hyphens (-). Boundaries of compounds are marked with a plus (+) when necessary.

[ ]	phonetic transcription
//	phonemic transcription
-	morpheme and clitic break
*	reconstructed form
> DU	dual object
> NSG	non-singular object
> PL	plural object
> SG	singular object

ABL	ablative	DUR	durative
ACC	accusative	DYA	dyadic
ACT	action (noun)	EL	elative
ADES	adessive	EP	epenthetic
ADJ	adjectivizer	EQUA	equative
ADV	adverbilizer, adverb	EVID	evidential
ALL	allative	EX	existential
AUD	auditive	EXCL	exclamative
AUG	augmentative	flk	folklore text
ASS	associative	flkd	folklore text dyurimi
CAR	caritive	flks	folklore text sytebi
CO	co-affix	FRQ	frequentative
COLL	collective	FUT	future
COM	comitative	GEN	genitive
COND	conditional	HAB	habitive
conv	conversation	HORT	hortative
CVB	converb	IMP	imperative
DEF	definite	INCH	inchoative
DIM	diminutive	INF	infinitive
DISC	discontinative	INST	instrumental
DRV	derivation suffix	INT	intentional
DST	destinative	IPFV	imperfective
DU	dual	IRR	irrealis

ITER	iterative	PROL	prolative
LAT	lative	PROP	propriative
LIM	limitative (only)	PRM	presumptive
LOC	locative	PRS	present
MD	medial	PS	Proto-Samoyedic
MOM	momentaneous	PST	past
nar	narrative (genre)	PTCP	participle
NAR	narrative (mood)	PU	Proto-Uralic
NEC	necessitative	REP	reportative
NEG	negation, negative	RES	resultative
NSG	non-singular	RGR	rhythmical gradation
NUM	number	SEL	selective
PART	partitive	SEM	semelfactive
PAUC	paucal	SG	singular
PFV	perfective	SGR	syllabic gradation
PL	plural	SNGL	singulative
PLH	placeholder	SUBJ	subjunctive
POSS	possessive	SUP	supine
POST	postposition	TR	transitive
PRF	perfect	TRL	translative
PRM	presumptive	VBLZ	verbalizer
PRO	pronoun		

## ABBREVIATIONS OF LANGUAGES

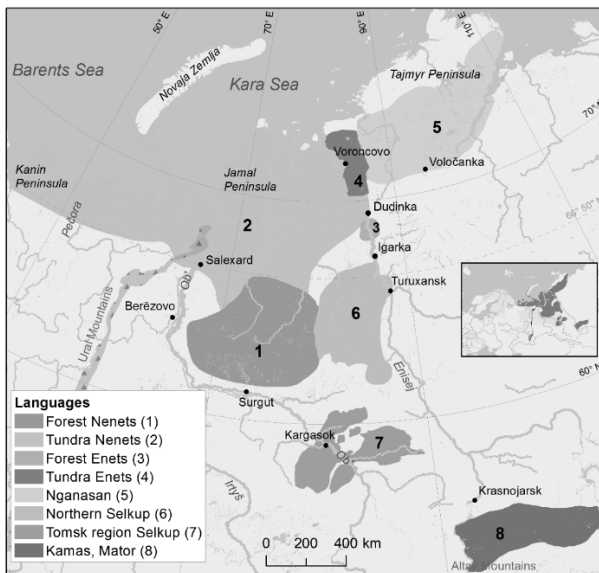
BZ	Bolshaya Zemlya dialect of Tundra Nenets
En	Enets
EnF	Forest Enets
EnT	Tundra Enets
Hung	Hungarian
Kam	Kamas
KamF	Full Kamas
KamR	Reactivated Kamas
KetL	Lower Ket variety of Selkup
KetM	Middle Ket variety of Selkup
KetL/M	Lower and Middle Ket mixed dialect of Selkup
KetU	Upper Ket variety of Selkup
Mat	Mator
Nad	Nadym dialect of Tundra Nenets
Nar	Narym dialect of Central Selkup
Nar/Tym	Narym and Tym mixed dialect of Central Selkup
Nen	Nenets
NenF	Forest Nenets
NenT	Tundra Nenets
Ngan	Nganasan
NganO	Old Nganasan
ObM	Middle Ob dialect of Southern Selkup
ObU	Upper Ob dialect of Southern Selkup
PS	Proto-Samoyedic
PSelk	Proto-Selkup
Rus	Russian
Selk	Selkup
SelkC	Central Selkup
SelkK	Ket Selkup
SelkN	Northern Selkup
SelkS	Southern Selkup
SelkT	Taz dialect of Northern Selkup
Tat	Tatar
TazM	Middle Taz dialect of Northern Selkup
TolkaU	Upper Tolka dialect of Northern Selkup

Turk	Turkic
Tym	Tym dialect of Central Selkup
Vasy	Vasyugan dialect of Central Selkup
Yam	Yamal dialect of Tundra Nenets

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The Samoyedic languages belong to the Uralic language family. This branch includes at least six languages: Nenets (with the varieties Tundra and Forest), Enets (with the varieties Tundra and Forest), Nganasan, Selkup (with the varieties Northern, Central, and Southern), and the now-extinct Kamas and Mator. The classification of the varieties of some languages is often the subject of heated debate. For more information, see the chapter on the respective languages. These languages are or were spoken across large parts of Western Siberia (Taimyr Peninsula), the northeastern Arctic coast of European Russia (Kanin Peninsula), and from the northernmost parts of the Eurasian continent to Southern Selkup in Central Siberia (see Figure 1-1, source: Rantanen et al. 2022).



**Figure 1-1 The Samoyedic language area**

Based on their geographical distribution, the Samoyeds can be divided into three groups: Tundra Samoyeds (Tundra Enets, Tundra Nenets, and Nganasan), who traditionally lived from fishing, reindeer herding, and hunting; Taiga (Forest) Samoyeds (Forest Nenets and Selkup), who were reindeer herders or farmers; and Mountain Samoyeds (Mator and Kamas).

The data from the Russian census of 2020, compared with the data from the 2010 census, show very low numbers of speakers in some cases, and the number of people who consider themselves to belong to these groups is often also very small. The data are shown in Chart (1).

(1)	year	Nenets	Enets	Nganasan	Selkup
population	2010	44,640	227	862	3,649
	2020	49,646	201	687	3,458
native speaker	2010	21,926	43	125	1,023
	2020	24,487	97	300	975
speakers of Russian	2010	40,813	219	851	3,612
	2020	47,021	199	679	3,446
EGIDIS <sup>1</sup>		6b	8a	8a	6b
		threatened	moribund	moribund	threatened

(Sources: [https://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/](https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/) and <https://fadn.gov.ru/otkritoe-agenstvo/vserossijskaya-perepis-naseleniya-2020/>)

It is evident from the chart that proficiency in the national language is low. Even if for some populations, such as the Enets or Nganasan, the comparative figures between 2010 and 2020 may suggest a certain optimism, these data are misleading and do not correspond to the results of field research (for Enets see §1.2, for Nganasan §1.3). It is also clear from the chart that almost all speakers are bilingual, with hardly any speakers who do not know Russian.

As we can see from the EGIDIS list in Chart (1), none of the languages are in a strong position. In the case of Nenets and Selkup, some children are still learning the language, but this does not encompass the entire population, resulting in incomplete transmission from generation to generation. This is not the case for Enets and Nganasan, where language transmission has been interrupted. While in the case of Nenets and Selkup all generations, or parts of them, use the language, the speakers of Enets and Nganasan belong primarily to the grandparents' generation. The Forest Nenets variety can also be classified as threatened, and the Central and Southern Selkup dialects are nearly extinct.

<sup>1</sup> Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale; accessed May 09, 2025 <https://www.ethnologue.com/insights/how-many-languages-endangered/>

## 1.1 Tundra and Forest Nenets

Both the Tundra and Forest Nenets varieties are endangered languages. They have often been considered dialects of a single language (formerly also known as Yurak Samoyed), but more recent studies acknowledge them as independent languages. In this study, we treat them as two distinct varieties.

The territory where the Tundra Nenets variety is spoken extends from the Kanin Peninsula (the eastern coast of the White Sea), located in Europe, to the Taimyr Peninsula in Northwestern Siberia (Nenets Autonomous Region, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Region, and Taimyr District). The Forest Nenets live in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Region and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region in Siberia. These areas are depicted in Figure 1-2 (source: Rantanen et al. 2022).



**Figure 1-2 Current residence of Nenets people**

The Tundra Nenets variety (henceforth NenT) can be classified into three dialectal groups: western, central, and eastern. The western and eastern dialects further include several subdialects, while the central dialect remains homogeneous, as depicted in Table 1-1.

Due to close contact with neighboring peoples, the Forest Nenets variety (henceforth NenF) exhibits significant dialectal differences influenced by various languages in their respective contact zones. Based on Castrén's data, the Forest Nenets variety was categorized into three primary dialects: Pur, Lyamin, and Nyamin. The main distinguishing feature among these dialects is the treatment of the correspondences of Tunda Nenets /r/ and /r'/, which appear either as /r/ and /r'/ or as /ʎ/ and /ʎ'/, alongside other linguistic features. Notably, the Nyamin dialect resembles the Tundra varieties, while the Pur dialect replaces /r/ and /r'/ with voiceless laterals /ʎ/ and /ʎ'/. In contrast, both varieties coexist in the Lyamin dialect (cf. Verbov 1973, 124–125, Koškarëva 2005, 16–22). However, Koškarëva (2005, 21) notes significant changes in dialectal divisions and distribution during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, largely due to the northward relocation of Forest Nenets families along the tributaries of the River Ob. Presently, three distinct Forest Nenets dialects can be identified: Pur, Agan, and Numto. Table 1-1 illustrates the dialects and their respective territories where Nenets is spoken. (The classification is based on Burkova 2010, 182.)

Variety	Dialectal group	Dialect	Territory
Tundra	Western	Kanin	Kanin tundra (from the Kanin Peninsula to the Pyosha River)
		Tyiman	Tyiman tundra (from River Pesha to River Indiga)
		Kolguev	on Kolguev Island
		Malaya Zemlya	Malozemelskiy tundra, from river Indiga to river Pechora.
	Central	Bolshaya Zemlya	in the eastern part of the Nenets Autonomous District Arkhangelsk region
	Eastern	Cis-Ural	areas from the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains to the Yamal Peninsula
		Yamal	Yamal Peninsula
		Nadym	in the Nadym River basin
		Taz	in the northeastern part of the Taz Peninsula on the right bank of Taz Bay; downstream of Taz

Tundra (cont.)	Eastern (cont.)	Gyda	the western part of Nadym Peninsula the western part of the Taz Peninsula
		Taimyr (Yenisei)	the western part of the Taimyr Peninsula and the basin of the lower Yenisei
Forest	Pur		basin Purin its upper, middle, and, partially, lower reaches
	Agan		along the tributaries of the Ob, Agan, and Amputa rivers
	Numto		in the area of Lake Numto and the upper part of the Kazym River

**Table 1-1 The dialectal distribution of the Nenets varieties**

Both phonetic and grammatical differences exist among the Tundra Nenets dialects, yet speakers can generally understand each other. These differences are detailed by scholars such as Tereščenko (1947, 7–8), Barmič (2018, 442–443), and Burkova (2010, 229–231). Here, we summarize the most significant properties based on their descriptions.

One notable difference is the allowance of words beginning with vowels. This is permissible only in the Western dialects (represented here by the Kanin dialect) and a few words in the Taimyr dialect of the Eastern group. However, in the Central dialect (represented here by Bolshaya Zemlya dialect, henceforth BZ), this practice is not allowed.

(2)

	<b>Kanin</b>	<b><math>\eta \sim \theta / \# \_</math></b> <b>BZ</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>
‘big’	<i>arka</i>	<i>ηarka</i>	<i>ηarka</i>
‘what’	<i>amge</i>	<i>ηamge</i>	<i>amge</i>
‘meat’	<i>amza</i>	<i>ηamza</i>	<i>ηamsa</i>

Another significant feature is the loss of /x/ in intervocalic positions in the Western dialect. This applies not only to stems but also to suffixes. It is worth noting that in some words, the vowel is not lengthened despite this change.

(3)	$x \sim \theta / \mathcal{N} \_ V$		
	<b>Kanin</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>
‘three’	<i>ńar</i>	<i>ńaxar?</i>	<i>ńaxar(?)</i>
‘body’	<i>pid</i>	<i>pixid</i>	<i>pixid</i>
‘through’	<i>t'a</i>	<i>t'axǎ</i>	<i>čaxǎ</i>
‘in the/a lake’	<i>toona</i>	<i>toxona</i>	<i>toxona</i>
‘from the earth’	<i>jaad</i>	<i>jaxad</i>	<i>jaxad</i>

According to Tereščenko (1956, 186), the loss of /x/ is observed also in the Taimyr as well as Yamal dialects. In this case, however, the speaker is shortening the word by dropping the syllable containing /x/ in the verb: BZ *jil'e-ńa-xan-da* [live-PTCP.PRS-LOC-POSS3SG] vs. Taimyr *jil'e-ńa-n-ta*, Yamal *jil'e-ńa-n-da* ‘when he was alive’. In the last two examples, the beginning (*xa-*) of the locative case is omitted.

Both the Western and Eastern dialects are characterized by denasalization and the loss of a nasal sonorant consonant in combinations like sonorant + nasal + voiced consonant. This phenomenon also affects derivational suffixes. For example, in the Central and Eastern dialects, the regular form of the durative suffix is *-mba*, while in the Western dialects, it is *-ba*. For instance, BZ *xomba* vs. Kanin *xoba* ‘he found’.

(4)	<b>Kanin</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>	
‘eagle’	<i>l'ib'a</i>	<i>limb'a</i>	<i>limb'a</i>	<i>mb ~ b</i>
‘during’	<i>mal'gana</i>	<i>mal'ngǎna</i>	<i>mal'ngǎna</i>	<i>ng ~ g</i>
‘work’	<i>mazja</i>	<i>mǎnzǎja</i>	<i>mǎnzǎja</i>	<i>nz ~ z</i>

The intervocalic glottal stop is absent in both the Western and Eastern dialects, but it is retained in the Bolshaya Zemlya dialect. Similarly, word-final glottal stops are not pronounced in Western dialects. In Eastern dialects, pronunciation varies: some speakers pronounce the glottal stop, while others do not.

(5)	<b>Kanin</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>
‘three’	<i>ńar</i>	<i>ńaxar?</i>	<i>ńaxar?</i>
‘bed’	<i>waw</i>	<i>wa?aw</i>	<i>waw</i>
‘seven’	<i>śiw</i>	<i>śi?iw</i>	<i>śiw</i>

There are also regular phonetic correspondences, primarily involving bilabial and postalveolar consonants. The palatalized affricate /ci/ is realized as [tʃ] in the Eastern dialect and as [tʃ] or [c] in the Western dialects. Here are a few examples.

(6)	<b>Kanin</b>	<b>BZ</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>	<b>meaning</b>
	<i>t'iw'a</i>	<i>t'ib'a</i>	<i>čib'a</i>	'tooth'
<i>b ~ w</i>	<i>xiw'a</i>	<i>xib'a</i>	<i>xib'a</i>	'who'
	<i>ńew'a</i>	<i>ńeb'a</i>	<i>ńeb'a</i>	'mother'
<i>c ~ č/t'</i>	<i>m'ert'a ~ m'erča</i>	<i>m'erc'a</i>	<i>m'erča</i>	'wind'
	<i>xab't'a ~ xabča</i>	<i>xabc'a</i>	<i>xabča</i>	'disease'
	<i>mart' ~ marč ~ marc'i</i>	<i>mārc'i</i>	<i>marč</i>	'shoulder'

The elimination of vowels between two consonants in the middle of a word is typical in the Western dialect and can also be observed in Eastern dialects. Nevertheless, in the Taimyr dialect, this deletion is not consistent, and in some words, it does not occur.

(7)	<b>Kanin</b>	<b>Bolshaya Zemlya</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>
'old man'	<i>wesko</i>	<i>wesako</i>	<i>wesko</i>
'ice'	<i>salba</i>	<i>salaba</i>	<i>salaba</i>
'elder brother'	<i>ńińka</i>	<i>ńińeka</i>	–
'dog'	<i>weńko</i>	<i>weńeko</i>	<i>weńeku</i>

In addition, there are some lexical differences. It is quite typical for the Eastern dialects to have shortened forms of personal pronouns. Some of these differences are listed in Chart (8), but this list is by no means exhaustive.

(8)	<b>Kanin</b>	<b>Bolshaya Zemlya</b>	<b>Taimyr</b>
's/he'	<i>pir</i>	<i>pidar</i>	<i>pidar</i>
'letter'	<i>m'arjo</i>	<i>padar?</i>	<i>padar?</i>
'rabbit'	<i>ńawko</i>	<i>tewaši</i>	–
'tail'	<i>saińi?</i>	<i>tewā</i>	<i>tewā</i>
'fisherman'	<i>nekulana</i>	<i>jor'ta</i>	<i>jorča</i>
'earth'	<i>tawko</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>ja</i>

There are also phonetic differences among the Forest Nenets dialects. As mentioned earlier, historically, a significant phenomenon in dialect differentiation was the presence of /ʎ/ and /tʃ/. In the Pur dialect, only /ʎ/ appeared in the position where /tʃ/ is found in the Nyamin dialect, whereas in the Lyamin dialect, both consonants could occur (cf. Koškarëva 2005, 17). Nowadays, all dialects feature only /ʎ/ and /ʎ'/, rendering the phonetic feature once considered distinctive now irrelevant. A new distinguishing feature has emerged, such as the occurrence of /dʃ/, /tʃ/, and /j/ (cf. Koškarëva 2005, 22). It is important to note that the names of the dialects have also

changed due to group relocations.

(9)	<b>Pur</b>	<b>Agan</b>	<b>Numto</b>
‘earth’	<i>d’a</i>	<i>t’a</i>	<i>ja</i>
‘day’	<i>d’ala</i>	<i>t’ala</i>	<i>jala</i>
‘orphan’	<i>d’ewaku</i>	<i>t’ewaku</i>	<i>jewaku</i>
‘there is’	<i>tad’a</i>	<i>tata</i>	<i>taja</i>
‘s/he goes’	<i>m’ind’a</i>	<i>m’int’a</i>	<i>m’inja</i>

An isogloss can be drawn between the Pur/Agan dialects and the Numto dialect based on the appearance of /š/ and /ś/; /w/ and /p/, respectively /w/ and /mp/ (cf. Koškarëva 2005, 22).

(10)	<b>Pur</b>	<b>Agan</b>	<b>Numto</b>	<b>meaning</b>
	<i>ŋaški</i>	<i>ŋaški</i>	<i>ŋaški</i>	‘child’
<i>š ~ ś</i>	<i>ŋeša</i>	<i>ŋeša</i>	<i>ŋeša</i>	‘father’
	<i>puʔša</i>	<i>puʔša</i>	<i>puʔša</i>	‘old woman’
<i>w ~ p</i>	<i>tuwka</i>	<i>tuwka</i>	<i>tupka</i>	‘axe’
<i>w ~ mw</i>	<i>ŋewa</i>	<i>ŋewa</i>	<i>ŋemwa</i>	‘dream’

As observed in Chart (5), in the Bolshaya Zemlya dialect, the intervocalic glottal stop is preserved, whereas in the other Tundra dialects, it is lost. A similar situation occurs in the Forest dialects; however, in the Pur dialect, the vowel following the glottal stop is dropped. In the Agan dialect, the vowel is preserved but the glottal stop is not, while in the Numto dialect, both the vowel and the glottal stop are dropped (cf. Koškarëva 2005, 22).

(11)	<b>Pur</b>	<b>Agan</b>	<b>Numto</b>
‘bed’	<i>waʔw</i>	<i>waaw</i>	<i>waw</i>
‘seven’	<i>šeʔw</i>	<i>šeew</i>	<i>šew</i>
‘up’	<i>čuʔŋ</i>	<i>čuunŋ</i>	<i>čuŋ</i>

## 1.2 Tundra and Forest Enets

Enets, formerly known as Yenisei Samoyed, consists of two varieties: Forest Enets and Tundra Enets, closely related to Nenets and Nganasan. Forest Enets was historically referred to as *baj* (or *pe-baj*) or *muggadi*, while Tundra Enets was known as *maddu* or *somatu* (for more detail, see Siegl 2013b, 38–39; Dolgikh 1970; Khanina et al. 2018). Previously, Enets was often classified as a dialect of Nenets and later as a single language (cf.

Prokofiev 1937c, Tereščenko 1966b, Sorokina 2010, Khanina and Shluinsky 2022, 2023, among others). However, in some recent works (cf. Salminen 1997, Janhunen 2009, Siegl 2013, among others), the two Enets varieties, which are mutually intelligible, are considered independent languages: Forest Enets (henceforth EnF) and Tundra Enets (henceforth EnT). In this study, we regard them as two varieties, despite some differences in lexicon and grammar between Forest and Tundra Enets.

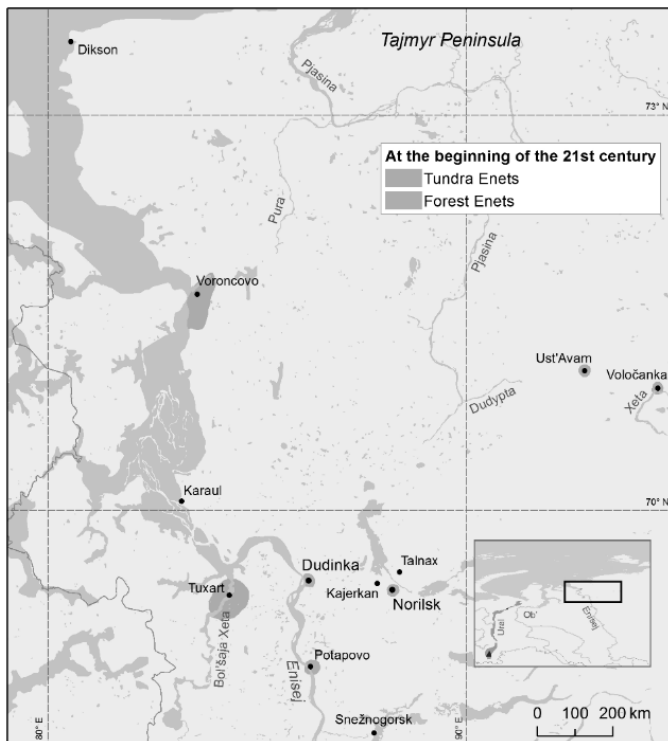
The varieties of the critically endangered Enets language are spoken in the western part of the Taimyr Peninsula, which is situated within the Krasnoyarsk Territory in Central Siberia. Currently, Forest Enets is spoken in the city of Dudinka and the village of Potapovo, located further south along the Yenisei River. Tundra Enets is spoken in and around the villages of Voroncovo and Tukhard (Tuxart). Voroncovo is approximately 350 km north of Dudinka, while Tukhard is about 100 km west of Dudinka on the left bank of the Yenisei River. This geographical separation between the Forest and Tundra Enets groups is depicted in Figure 1-3 (source: Rantanen et al. 2022).

However, the current distribution is a result of historical developments. In the past, Enets communities lived on the left bank of the Yenisei River, slightly further south than their present territories. Due to the westward expansion of the Nenets and the arrival of Selkup and Ket people from the south, the Enets crossed the river and migrated northwards. Forest Enets groups began settling on the left bank of the river only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For more detailed information on migration processes and former Enets territories, refer to Khanina et al. (2018) or Siegl (2022).

According to the official Census of 2020, there are reported to be 97 Enets speakers. However, data from field researchers present a starkly different reality. According to Khanina et al. (2018, 110) or Khanina, and Shluinsky (2023, 793–794), there are only a handful of Enets speakers left: approximately 20 speakers of Forest Enets residing in Potapovo and Dudinka, and approximately 15 speakers of Tundra Enets, with about 10 being nomadic alongside Tundra Nenets in the Tukhard tundra, and 5 residing in the village of Voroncovo. The findings presented by Siegl (2013, 39–40; 2022, 709–719) are consistent with this description.

All remaining speakers are over the age of 50–60, and they are all bilingual in Russian and Enets, with some also knowing Tundra Nenets. The transmission of the Enets language to younger generations has been interrupted, leading to its classification as a critically endangered language.

There are phonetic differences between the two Enets dialects, as summarized by Helimski (1984) and Khanina and Shluinsky (2022, 182–185). One difference is the presence of word-initial vowels, which are common



**Figure 1-3 Current residence of Enets**

in Tundra Enets but often augmented by nasal consonants in Forest Enets. However, this does not mean that all words in Forest Enets must begin with a consonant: EnT *aburi* ‘head’, EnF *eba* ‘head’

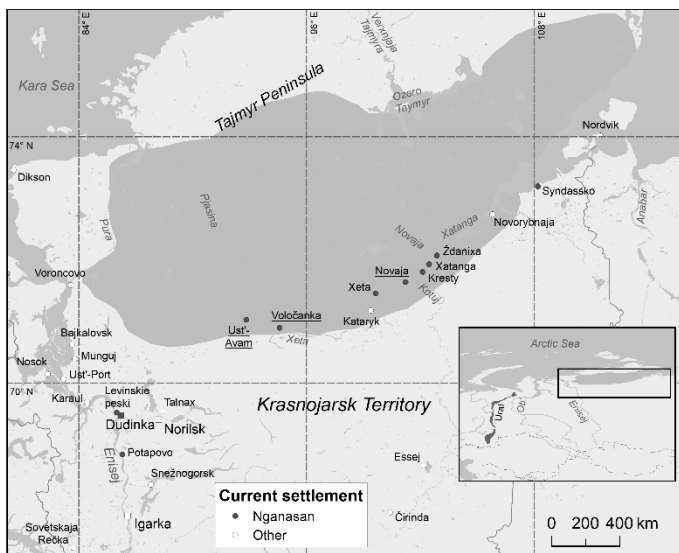
Another phonological distinction is the contrast between /d/ and /ð/ or /s/, and /ɛ/ versus /e/. Some examples are provided in Chart (12); for further examples, refer to Helimski (1994), Siegl (2022), or Khanina and Shluinsky (2022).

(12)	<b>Tundra Enets</b>	<b>Forest Enets</b>
‘horn’	<i>edo</i>	<i>nadu</i>
‘wind’	<i>med'e</i>	<i>mɛze, mɛse</i>
‘house, tent’	<i>meʔ</i>	<i>mɛʔ,</i>
‘child’	<i>nio</i>	<i>ne</i>

In the Tundra variety, it is typical that the deletion of the vowel at the end of the word has not occurred, e.g., EnF *d'oxa-xan* [river-LOC] ‘in the river’ vs. TEn. *tuddi?o-xone* [lake-LOC] ‘in the lake’.

### 1.3 Nganasan

The Nganasan people, formerly known as Tavgi Samoyed, reside in the Taimyr Dolgan–Nenets Municipal District, which is part of the Krasnoyarsk Territory. Presently, the language is predominantly spoken in two main villages, Ust'-Avam and Volochanka, with some limited usage in Dudinka and a few other villages where only a small number of Nganasan individuals reside. The current settlements and the former nomadic territories are depicted in Figure 1-4 (source: Rantanen et al. 2022).



**Figure 1-4 Current residence of Nganasan**

Nganasan, classified as 8a on the EGIDS scale, is considered critically endangered and moribund. Despite the Census data of 2020 (see Chart (1) above) indicating a significant increase in the number of speakers from 125 to 300, this figure is now in question. According to field observations by multiple researchers and private sources, the actual number of Nganasan speakers is steadily declining. Presently, there are no more than a dozen

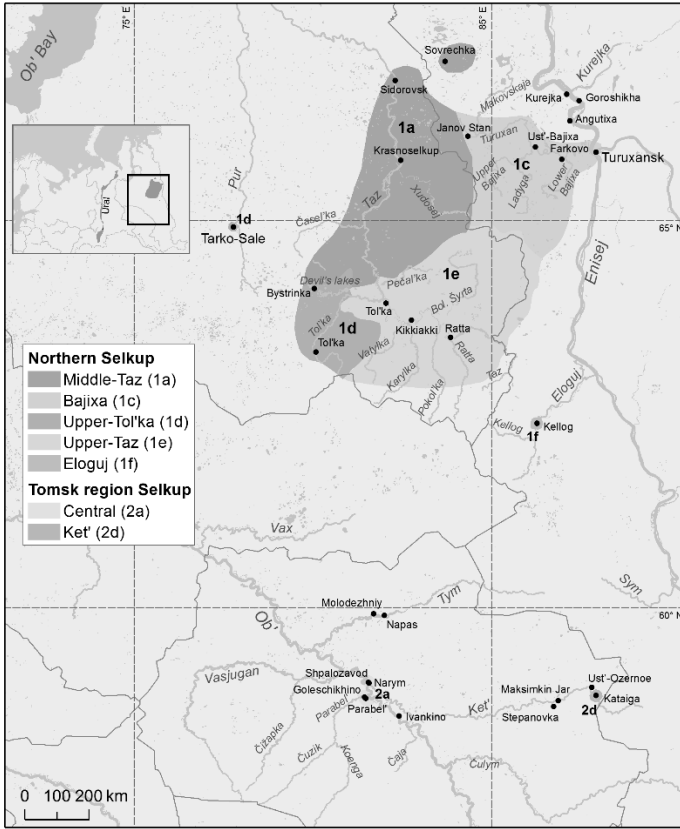
speakers left, all of whom belong to the older generation. The transmission of the language to younger generations has ceased.

Nganasan comprises two dialects that do not significantly differ from each other. The majority of the population (approximately 75%) uses the Avam dialect, spoken in the western part of the peninsula. This dialect includes two sub-dialects: Pyasina Avam, spoken in Ust'-Avam and Volochanka, and Taimyr Avam, now only spoken in Volochanka. A small minority on the eastern side of the peninsula speaks the Vadayev dialect.

The differences between Nganasan dialects primarily manifest in phonetic and lexical aspects, for instance, Avam *d'aðətuŋ* vs. Vadayev *jaðətuŋ* 'to them'; Avam *ŋojbəud'a* vs. Vadayev *torəud'a* meaning 'to work' (for more examples, see Tereščenko 1979, 4 and Helimski 1998a, 481). Research has identified very few morphological differences between the dialects. For example, in the Pyasina sub-dialect, the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular imperative form ends with *-ðəm*, while in the Taimyr dialect, the medial conjugation ending *-nə* is used. This can be seen in examples like *huu-lə-ku-ðəm* vs. *huu-lə-ku-nə* [look.for-IMP-IMP.1SG] 'let me look for', *məj-ku.ðəm* vs. *məj-ku-nə* [make-IMP-IMP.1SG] 'let me make it'.

## 1.4 Selkup

Selkup, formerly known as Ostyak Samoyed, is the only surviving language belonging to the Southern Samoyedic group. It is spoken in Central-Western Siberia along the tributaries of the Yenisei and River Ob in the Tomsk Region (including Kargasok, Parabel, Kolpashevo, and Upper-Ket districts), the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area (including Krasnoselkup and Pur districts), and in the Turukhansk district of the Krasnoyarsk Territory. These regions are shown in Figure 1-5 (source: Rantanen et al. 2022).



**Figure 1-5 Current residence of Selkup**

The classification of Selkup dialects has been extensively debated among scholars (see, among others, Castrén 1855; Donner 1924; Prokofiev 1935; Dulson 1971; Helimski 1998b; Katz 1979; Janurik 1978; Gluškov 2001; Gluškov et al. 2011). This language is typically divided into three or four main dialectal groups associated with the Taz, Narym, Tym, Ob, and Ket’ rivers. These dialectal groups form a larger dialect continuum where the differences between adjacent dialects are not pronounced, yet speakers of distant dialects may struggle to communicate with each other. Table 1-2 presents the main dialectal classification and sub-dialects.

Dialectal group	Dialect	Sub-dialect
Northern		Middle Taz
	Taz	Upper Taz
	Baikha	
	Turukhan	
	Yelogui	
	Upper Tolka	
Central	Tym	
	Narym	
	Vasyugan	
Southern	Ob	Middle-Ob
		Upper Ob
	Chulym	
	(Lower) Chaya	
Ket	Middle-Ket	
	Upper-Ket	

**Table 1-2 Dialectal groups and dialects of Selkup**

There are notable grammatical, phonetic, and lexical differences between Selkup dialects and dialectal groups, as evidenced in Chart (13). These differences highlight distinct features across various regions. An isogloss can be observed at the border between the Northern and Central dialects, with the Central dialectal group sometimes serving as a transitional zone.

(13)	Northern	Central	Southern	Ket
‘egg’	<i>eŋ</i>	<i>aabi, ńaabi</i>	<i>keqäj, ńaabi</i>	<i>ńabi</i>
‘duck’	<i>šiipa</i>	<i>ńaab</i>	<i>ńab</i>	<i>ńab</i>
‘small’	<i>kıpa</i>	<i>kıba</i>	<i>ńuńo</i>	<i>ńüńü</i>
‘old woman’	<i>ımaqota</i>	<i>paja</i> <i>ıma</i>	<i>paja</i>	<i>paja</i>
‘old man’	<i>ıraqota</i> <i>ıra</i>	<i>ara</i>	<i>ara</i>	<i>ara</i>
‘nose’	<i>ıntel’</i>	<i>puč, pučče</i>	<i>pucce</i>	<i>put’e</i>
‘moss’	<i>qıt</i>	<i>čumb</i>	<i>čumba</i>	<i>t’umbo</i>
‘drum’	<i>nuņa</i>	<i>nowa</i>	<i>piŋgir</i>	<i>pəggər</i>

Donner (1920, 12) noted substantial phonetic differences among speaker groups, suggesting distinct varieties for nearly every village he studied,