NIVKH AS A URALO-SIBERIAN LANGUAGE

FREDERIK KORTLANDT

In his magnificent book on the language relations across Bering Strait (1998), Michael Fortescue does not consider Nivkh (Gilyak) to be a Uralo-Siberian language. Elsewhere I have argued that the Indo-European verbal system can be understood in terms of its Indo-Uralic origins (2001). All of these languages belong to Joseph Greenberg’s Eurasian macro-family (2000). In the following I intend to reconsider the grammatical evidence for including Nivkh into the Uralo-Siberian language family. The Indo-Uralic evidence is of particular importance because it guarantees a time depth which cannot otherwise be attained.

Nivkh initial consonants are subject to mutations which are strongly reminiscent of Celtic. Adopting Ekaterina Gruzdeva’s transcription (1998) except for the uvulars q, q’, ŋ, ķ, x̄, γ̄ and the velar nasal ŋ, we can summarize the alternations as follows:

1. p, t, t’, k, q become v, r, z, y, ŭ after a vowel (which may have been lost) and analogically in certain categories;
2. p, t, t’, k, q become b, d, d’, g, ġ after a nasal (which may or may not be lost);
3. p, t, t’, k, q become f, ř, s, x, ŭ after the 2sg. prefix č- and the reflexive prefix p’-;
4. p’, t’, č, k’, q’ become f, ř, s, x, ŭ under the same conditions as (1) and (3) but remain unchanged under the conditions of (2);
5. p’, t’, č, k’, q’ become v, r, z, y, ŭ after the 3sg. prefix i-/e- in ablauting and cluster-initial verbs, e.g. iyd’ ‘kills’ of the verb k’u- ‘kill’ (cf. Krejnović 1958: 23f., Mattissen 2001: 142-146).

On the basis of these alternations I reconstruct *VC for the voiced fricatives, *VNC for the voiced stops, *VHC for the voiceless fricatives, and *HC for the aspirated stops, where *C represents p, t, t’, k, q. Moreover, *VNHC > *VHC and *VHCC > *VCC. If *H developed from *h < *s, this brings the original consonant system rather close to the one reconstructed for Proto-Uralic (cf. Kortlandt 2001: 7).
Among the morphological elements for which I have suggested an Indo-Uralic origin (2001: 5f.), the following are likely candidates for a comparison with Nivkh (I retain the numbering of Greenberg 2000):

1. first person *m,
4. second person *t,
8. demonstrative *i/e,
11. demonstrative *t,
12. demonstrative *s,
14. dual *ki,
15. plural *t,
25. genitive *n,
44. participle *nt,
45. participle *l,
46. verbal noun *s,
54. reflexive *u/w.

Other possible connections are less convincing. Nivkh case markers and postpositions appear to have a lexical source (cf. Panfilov 1962: 143-156 and Mattissen 2001: 93). The Uralic participle in *-pa (Collinder 1960: 270) and the Nivkh gerund in *-pa (Panfilov 1965: 145) may represent the only Uralo-Nivkh formation without an Indo-European cognate unless they are related to the root of the English verb ‘to be’. The reconstruction of interrogative *k and relative *j is highly questionable.

The principal evidence for the Uralo-Siberian character of the Nivkh language is provided by the pronominal elements *m, *t, *i/e, *t, *s, *u/w. The personal pronouns are the following (cf. Gruzdeva 1998: 25f.; my reconstructions):

1sg. nʼi: *nʼi,
1du. megi/megę, menų, memak: *menki,
1pl.in mer/mir, meřn/miřn, min: *mer,
1pl.ex nʼyn, nʼın: *nʼın,
2sg. či: *či,
2pl. čyn, čin: *čįn,
3sg. if, i, jäń: *iw,
3pl. imę, ivę, imy, iřn, in: *iwę.

These paradigms can be derived from the Indo-Uralic pronouns 1sg. *mi, 1du. *men-ki (‘the two of us’), 1pl. *me-t, 2sg. *ti, 3sg. *i/e (cf. Kortlandt 2001: 9f.), where sg. *mi, *ti, pl. *me are the reconstructed stems and *-n, *-ki, *-t are the suffixes for genitive, dual and plural mentioned above. The Indo-Uralic cognates suggest that Nivkh nʼi and či developed phonetically from *mi and *ti, respectively. While the latter development is commonplace, the former is remi-
niscent of Czech [mn‘] < mj-, e.g. in město [mn‘esto] ‘city’, also (as Jos Schaeken reminds me) North Russian [n‘] < [mn‘] < *-mj-, e.g. na zen‘i ‘on the ground’, na zen‘ı ‘to the ground’ (Zaliznjak 1995: 62, Honselaar 2001: 23). It has been suggested that the pronominal stem me- must be derived from the numeral stem me- ‘two’ (cf. Austerlitz 1959: 109, Panfilov 1962: 205f.). This is highly improbable because it does not explain the occurrence of me- in the plural, the semantic contribution of the suffixes, and the unexpected order of the pronominal and the numeral element (cf. Greenberg 1997: 192), cf. also megmen ‘we two’ (Panfilov 1962: 233), which cannot possibly be glossed as ‘two-du. two’. I reconstruct *iw for 3sg. if, oblique stem iv-, because this pronoun is limited to the Amur dialect, where *w > v (cf. Gruzdeva 1998: 11), and corresponds to i, oblique stem j- in Sakhalin (cf. Mattissen 2001: 20). It seems attractive to derive this *-w from the Indo-Uralic reflexive element *u/w, which may have been used as a reinforcement of the 3sg. pronoun *i/e. The Indo-Uralic demonstratives *t- and *s- are reflected in the Nivkh demonstrative stems t- ‘this’ and h- ‘that’ (cf. Gruzdeva 1998: 26, Mattissen 2001: 21).

Apart from the personal pronouns, there are personal prefixes which denote the possessor of a following noun or the undergoer of a following verb form (cf. Mattissen 2001: 62ff. for the distribution of the allomorphs):

- 1sg. n‘-, n‘i-, n‘e-, n-,
- 2sg. č-, či-, če-, t‘-,
- 3sg. i-, v(i)-, j-, e-,
- reflexive p‘-, p‘i-, p‘e-,
- reciprocal u-, v-, o-.

On the basis of the alternations in the root-initial consonant I reconstruct the following paradigms (cf. Mattissen 2001: 66-69):

- pāx ‘stone’,
- n’vāx ‘my stone’ < *mi-,
- čfāx ‘your stone’ < *tis-,
- p’fāx ‘one’s own stone’ < *pis-,
- ibāx ‘his/her stone’ < *in-,
- n’ynbāx ‘our stone’ < *minkun-,
- n’zad´ ‘beats me’ < *mi-,
- čsad´ ‘beats you’ < *tis-,
- p’sad´ ‘beats him/herself < *pis-,
- zad´ ‘beats someone’ < *i-,
- id´ad´ ‘beats him/her’ < *in-,
- n’ynd’ad´ ‘beats us’ < *minkun-,
where *-kun is the plural suffix (cf. Gruzdeva 1998: 16, Greenberg 2000: 116). The 3sg. possessive prefix \( v(i) \)-, which is limited to the Amur dialect, apparently represents *iwin- and may have been introduced when initial *i- was lost. The final nasal of possessive *in- may represent the original genitive suffix *-n and may have been introduced into the verbal prefix for emphasis (cf. Mattissen 2001: 65). The reconstruction of final *-s in *tis- and *pis- accounts both for the following voiceless fricative and for the aspiration of the preceding plosive after the syncope of the intervening vowel.

The labial element of \( p'i \)- has no obvious etymology. It is reminiscent of Latin *ipse 'self', but also of dative *sibi, Greek pl. *sphi < *sb'i beside sg. *hoi < *swoi (for earlier *su'i, cf. Kortlandt 2001: 9), Slavic *sebë, of which *p'i- could be the phonetic reflex, further Prussian *sup's 'self', Gothic *siba 'clan', *silba 'self', cf. Greek *philos 'dear', Indo-European *b'hi 'near', which is perhaps related to Nivkh *fid' 'be in a place', *p'iyn 'inhabitant' (Greenberg 2000: 146). The prefix \( p'i- \) may have ousted *u- from its original reflexive function into secondary reciprocal use, as in Russian *oni celujutsja 'they kiss each other' but *oni celujutsebja 'they kiss themselves', cf. Nivkh *ozmud' 'love each other' versus *p'ezmud' 'love him/herself' (Panfilov 1965: 52). This idea is supported by the possibility of identifying the labial of the 3sg. possessive prefix *v(i)- < *iwin- with the reciprocal verbal prefix *u-, as was suggested above. It allows us to identify the latter with the Indo-Uralic reflexive morpheme *u/w (cf. Kortlandt 2001: 14).

The verbal ending *-d', *-t', *-t, *-nd, *-nt, *-t < *-nt(i) (Gruzdeva 1998: 22, 33) can be identified with the Indo-Uralic participial suffix *nt (cf. Collinder 1960: 269f., 277f., Greenberg 2000: 184f.). It is found in finite and infinite verb forms and in particibles and verbal nouns in Nivkh, Uralic, and Indo-European (cf. Panfilov 1962: 64-68, 1965: 153f., Kortlandt 2001: 16) and is therefore a strong piece of evidence for a common origin. Another participial formation which may have been inherited are the verbal adjectives in *-l- (cf. Panfilov 1965: 85-88, Greenberg 2000: 190), e.g. Latin *bibulus, Nivkh *raxyla n'ivx 'drinker, drunkard', as opposed to *ra n'ivx 'drinker, person drinking'. This suffix is found in iterative verbs in Uralic (cf. Collinder 1960: 275f.). Finally, the Indo-Uralic verbal noun in *-s- (cf. Collinder 1960: 271, Greenberg 2000: 191f.) may be reflected in the Nivkh deverbal nouns in *s-t(i) denoting subject, object, instrument or result and in *f < *s-p(i) denoting place of action or result (Panfilov 1962: 41-48, Gruzdeva 1998: 22). The labial of the latter suffix may again be identified with Indo-European *b'hi 'near' and with the root of the Nivkh verb *fid' 'be in a place'. Thus, I think that we have strong indications of a close relationship between Nivkh and Indo-Uralic. The relations between these and the other Uralo-Siberian languages remain to be clarified (cf. also Bouda 1960, Tailleur 1960, Naert 1962).
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Uralo-Siberian language family. The Indo-Uralic evidence is of particular importance because it guarantees a time depth which cannot otherwise be at all close relationship between Nivkh and Indo-Uralic. The relations between these and the other Uralo-Siberian languages remain to be clarified (cf. also Bouda. 1960, Taillieu 1960, Naert 1962). Nivkh as a uralo-siberian language 5. References. Austerlitz, Robert. It will be demonstrated that the case for the genetic relationship of two of the constituent groups, Chukotko-Kamchatkan and the isolated Amuric language Nivkh (Gilyak), is actually quite strong, although the rest of the grouping must indeed be abandoned as a genetic unit. A case is made for reconstructing a Chukotko-Kamchatkan- Amuric proto-language associated with the Neolithic of the Lower Amur and adjacent coasts of the Sea of Okhotsk. One of the highlights of the book is the proposed kinship between Eskimo-Aleut, Chukotko-Kamchatkan (CK), Yukaghir and Uralic languages forming a new Uralo-Siberian family. Uralo-Siberian is a hypothetical language family consisting of Uralic, Yukaghir, Eskimo-Aleut, possibly Nivkh and formerly Chukotko-Kamchatkan. It was proposed in 1998 by Michael Fortescue, an expert in Eskimo-Aleut and Chukotko-Kamchatkan, in his book Language Relations across Bering Strait. In 2011, Fortescue removed Chukotko-Kamchatkan from the proposal. This puts the dissolution of the Uralo-Siberian language family in the 7th millennium. It now becomes attractive to identify the latter with the abrupt climate change of 8200 BP or 6200 BC, when severe cold struck the northern hemisphere for more than a century. The catastrophic nature of this disastrous event agrees well with the sudden dispersal and large-scale lexical replacement which are characteristic of the Uralo-Siberian languages. Collinder, Björn. REFERENCES. Nivkh as a Uralo-Siberian language. Per aspera ad asteriscos [Fs. Rasmussen]. Nivkh /ˈniÉfk/, Gilyak /ˈɡɪljæk/ or Amuric is a small language family, often portrayed as a language isolate, of two or three mutually unintelligible languages spoken by the Nivkh people in Outer Manchuria, in the basin of the Amgun (a tributary of the Amur), along the lower reaches of the Amur itself, and on the northern half of Sakhalin. "Gilyak" is the Russian rendering of terms derived from the Tungusic "Gileke" and Manchu-Chinese "Gilemi" (Gilimi, Gilyami) for culturally similar peoples of the