

# *Evidentiality in Northern Selkup shamanic texts*



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# Outline

- *Introduction*
- *Types of shamanic texts*
- *Data*
- *Gramaticalized evidentiality*
- *Evidential particles*
- *Conclusion*

## ***Selkup Languages: Uralic, Samoyedic***

*Population Census 2010*

*Ethnic group strength 3612*

*Consider Selkup their mother tongue 1334 (36,6%)*

*Selkup speakers 945 (25,9%) / about **600***

### ***Northern Selkup***

*Ethnic group strength 1811*

*Consider Northern Selkup their mother tongue 1271  
(70%)*

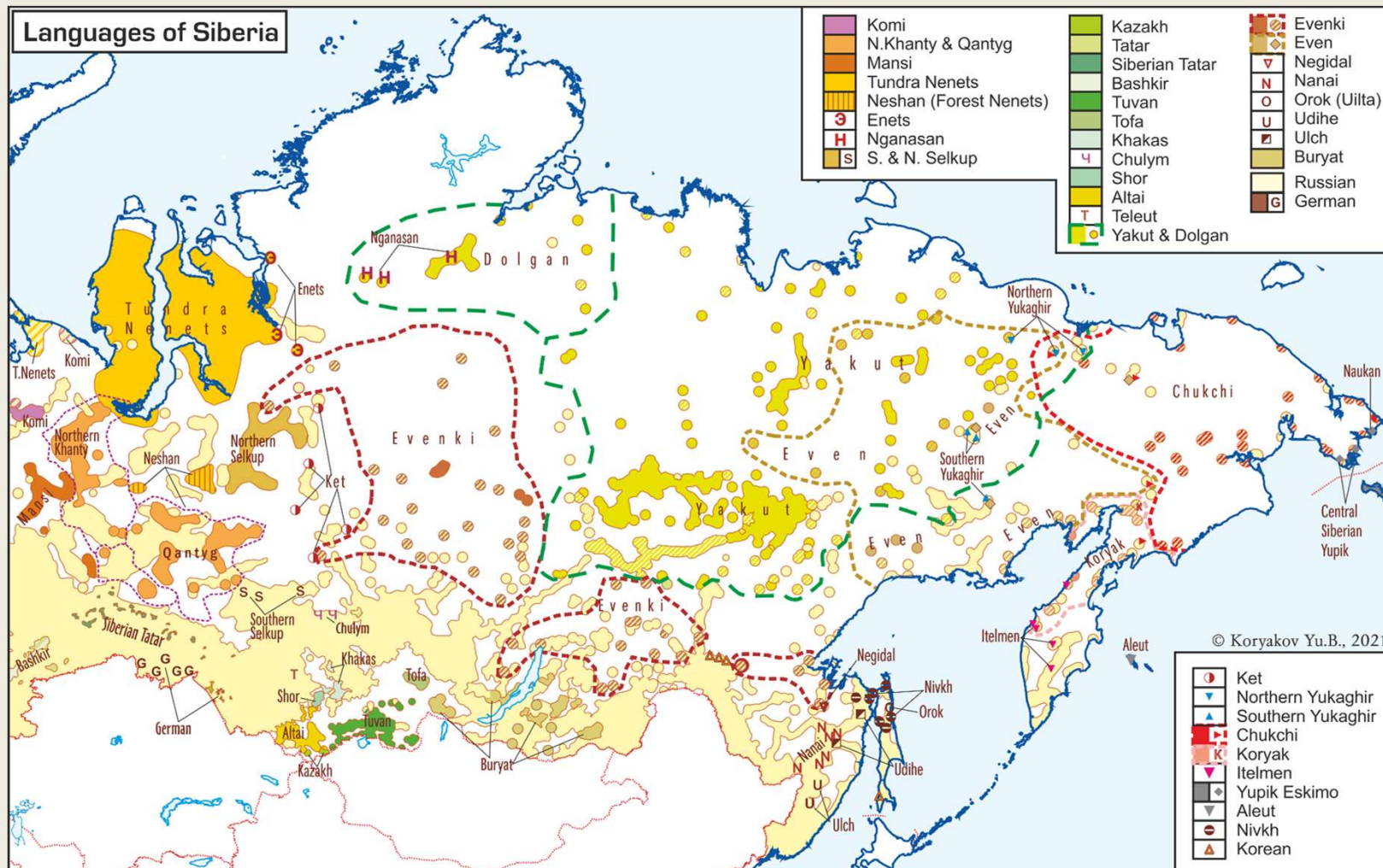
*Northern Selkup speakers 866 (49%) / about 600*

### ***Southern Selkup***

*Ethnic group strength 1181*

*Consider Southern Selkup their mother tongue 22 (1,9%)*

*Southern Selkup speakers 50 (4%) / under **10 (3)***







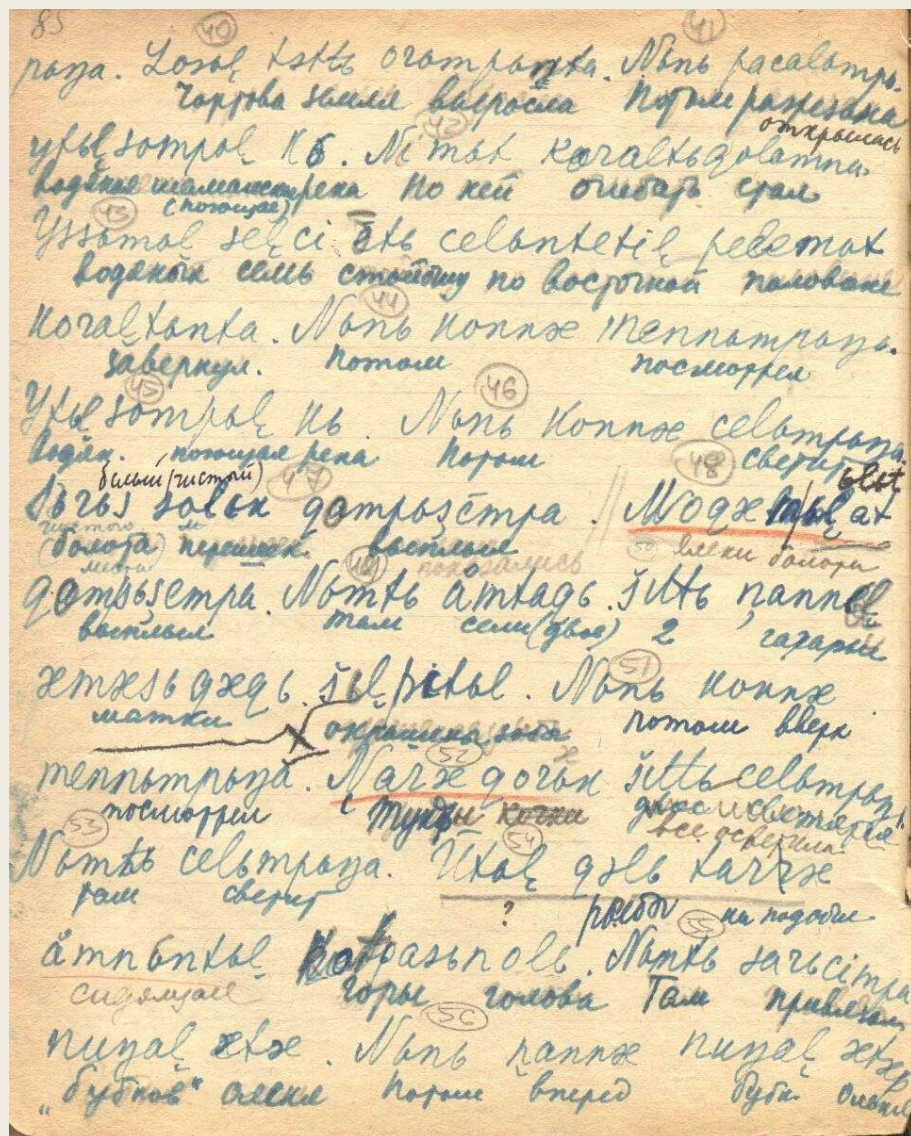
## Types of shamanic texts

- *Stories about shamans*
- *Shamanic legends*
- *Stories about shamanic rites:  
reminiscences of their participants*
- *Shamanic incantations (fragments of rites  
and personal songs)*

# Shamanic incantations of the Northern Selkups

- *Songs of the Northern Selkups from the K.Donner audioarchive (2014) 4*
- *Selkup shamanic songs from the Georgy and Ekaterina Prokofiev's archive of (1925–1928) 4*
- *Shaman way from the Liudmila Varkovitskaya's archive (1941) 1*
- *Selkup Shamanic songs from the Viktor Rudolf's audio archive (1982) 8*
- *Shamanic songs from the Multimedia computer archive of the LCL RCC MSU / LSPML Institute of Linguistics RAS (1996–2015) 6*

# Shaman way



A page from L. Varkovitskaya's field notebook with a fragment of the text recorded from Semen Kusamin in 1941.

The text describes a shaman travel to the lower world, the world of the dead, for the stolen sole of the sick to return the sole to the dying person and thus cure him.



## Grammaticalized evidential: verb forms

- Latentive (Evidential)

-nt / -t

Position in the verb form: between the marker of tense and person

[Past narrative (inferential)]

-mp / -p

Position in the verb form : tense marker]

(1) tʃe:li-t(i) aj iræ-ti tʃe:l-ent-i naj  
sun-POSS.3SG and moon-POSS.3SG shine-IPFV-3SG.SBJ so.it.is

‘The sun and the moon are shining (lit. is shining) so it is,’

innæ-ni qə:ti-mmi-nt-a na  
up-ELAT glow-DUR-EVID-3SG.SBJ there

‘they are shining (lit. is shining), it seems,  
from above.’

qɪʃqa-n nan εj qə:t-æli-mmi-nt-ɔ:tɪn  
star-PL for.a.while also sparkle-PLSBJ-DUR-EVID -3PL

‘The stars are also sparkling for a while, it seems,’  
(1982)

(2) manni-mp-an    εj    manni-mp-an    εj    naj  
look-DUR-1SG.SBJ    and    look-DUR-1SG.SBJ    and    so.it.is

‘I keep watching and watching, so it is:’

seλtʃi    lɪmpɪ    ɪli-nt-a                                    na

seven eagle live-EVID-3SG.SBJ    there

‘Seven eagles live there, it seems.’ (1982)

(3) ni:ni: takki menni-**mpi**-ŋ-a  
then downstream look-**PSTN**-EP-3SG.SBJ  
'Then he looked downstream (to the north)'

takki-t tap tʃeli-mpi-**nt**-a  
downstream-LOC this shine-DUR-**EVID**-3SG.SBJ  
'In the north it is as if shining.'

y-ʌ losi-ʌ ɛ:ti tʃeli-mpi-**nt**-a  
water-ADJ devil-ADJ settlement shine-DUR-**EVID**-3SG.SBJ  
'Water devil settlement is shining, it seems' (1941)



(4) qən-mi-nt-ɔ:n na i:lɪ-læ

go-PSTN-EVID-3PL there rise-CVB

‘off they flew (lit. went), it seems, so having risen’

qən-mi-nt-ɔ:n naj

go-PSTN-EVID-3PL so.it.is

‘off they flew (lit. went), it seems, so it is.’ (1982)

## Evidential particles: *mita*

(5) ku:tɪ-n-tɪt      pɔ:ri-n      ken      *mita*      naj  
wing-GEN-POSS.3PL upper.side-PL indeed *PRT.EVID* so.it.is

‘The upper sides of their wings, it seems, indeed, so it is’

ori-ŋ      ɲoʌm-ɛj-mp-ɔ:tɪn      ken      *mita*      nɪ-ŋ  
strength-ADVZ glitter-PFV.INTENS-DUR-3PL indeed *PRT.EVID* such-ADVZ  
‘glitter strongly, it seems, indeed, so’ (1982)

(6) i:l-ɛ:-mp-ɔ:tɪt      ken      *mita*      naj  
rise-PFV.INTENS-*PSTN*-3PL indeed *PRT.EVID* so.it.is

‘They rose, it seems, indeed, so it is’ (1982)

## Evidential particles: **mompa**

(7) na            qaj    **mompa**  
this            what **PRT.EVID.REP**

‘This is what they say:’

tʃe:li-ti            niʌtʃi-ŋ    ap-qil-**p**-ati  
sun-POSS.3SG such-ADVZ съестъ-PLOBJ-**PSTN**-3SG.OBJ  
‘the sun has burnt (their wings) so much.’ (1982)

## Evidential particles: **monti**

(8) **monti** **mita** sel'tʃi panɨira qaj ty-**nt-i**

PRT.EVID.VIZ PRT.EVID seven braid man what come-EVID-3SG.SBJ

‘Looks like as if the man with seven braids came, didn’t he.’ (1925)



## Conclusion

- An abundance of evidential verb forms (about one third of all personal verb forms in shamanic songs are forms with the evidential marker -nt, another quarter are forms of the past narrative tense with the marker -mp/-p, also included in the sphere of evidentiality) and evidential particles (mainly mita 'seems') is a characteristic feature of Selkup shamanic incantations.
- In these incantations the shaman describes what he sees in other worlds, inaccessible to the eyes of ordinary people. These visions are unusual for the people's world, and the evidential forms emphasize the unusualness of what is being described, and its non-obviousness (I see, but I'm not entirely sure that this is the case) and, perhaps, also surprise (mirativity).

## Publication of Northern Selkup shamanic incantations

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- Казакевич О.А. Видение селькупского шамана // Антропологический форум. 2018. № 38. С. 195-208.



*Thank you!*