

Language descriptions for teachers of minority languages

{ Maria Pupynina
Institute for linguistic studies, St. Petersburg

Descriptive grammars and typology,
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- Other linguists

(aim: to facilitate the comparison between the described language and other languages using the most widely-accepted terminology)

- Community members

(aim: to describe the language in the most easily-understandable and non-boring form)

Who do we write grammars for?



Our best consultants
(perfectly fluent speakers
with minimum
education)

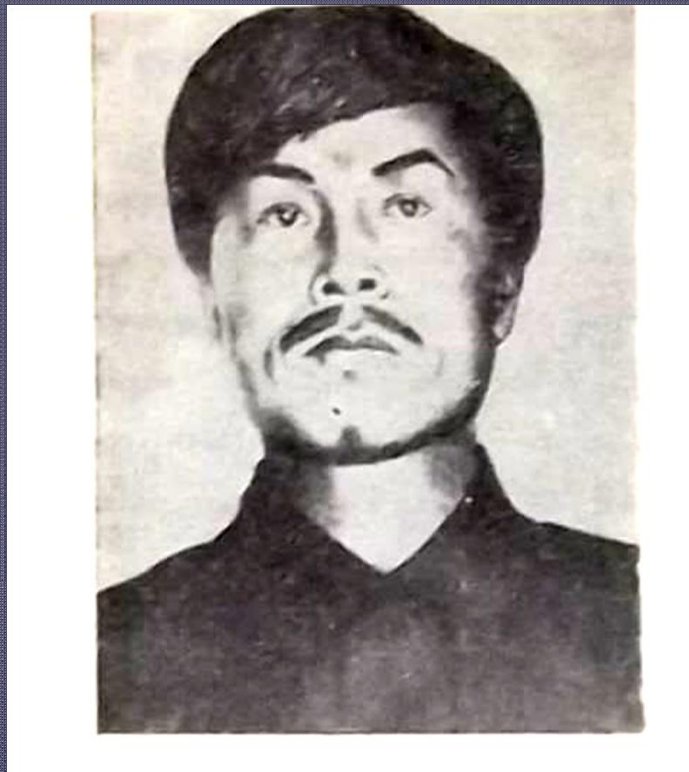


National
intelligentsia

Community members

- ✎ From the early times of the Soviet power, special efforts were made to form 'national intelligentsia' (educated strata in each officially recognized ethnic group). The mission of these strata was to transfer communist and socialist values to their community. These people were the first to learn how to write and read in their language.

National intelligentsia



Tegrynkeu, Chukchi: director of Komitet
for the new alphabet

- ⌘ People who were considered appropriate for this mission were encouraged by the local authorities to study in colleges (in the regional centers) and universities with special departments for minority peoples where they could develop skills in their minority languages (in Magadan, Khabarovsk, St. Petersburg and other cities).

National intelligentsia



Teki Odulok, Kolyma Yukaghir
ethnographer and writer



Anton Pyrerka, Tundra Nenets
linguist and writer



Antonina Kymytwal, Chukchi poet



Lubov Verigirgina, Chukchi teacher
in the primary school

- ⌘ National intelligentsia formed to some extent (there appeared writers, poets and teachers who taught their languages in their communities)
- ⌘ At present, it is still considered 'prestigious' to go to the high school
- ⌘ However, a lot of departments, where minority language teachers were trained in the Soviet times , were closed in the 1990s.

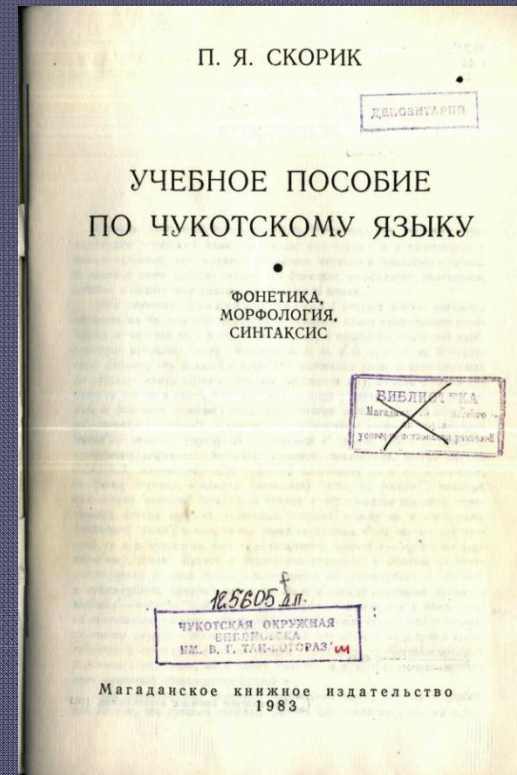
Present time



Students of Institute of the peoples of
the North, St. Petersburg, 2017

A course book by P. Skorik

- ~ based on his grammar book, but the majority of sentential examples are excluded
- ~ traditional old-fashioned terminology typical for Russian-dominant linguistic paradigm
- ~ based mainly on elicitation material
- ~ too overcomplicated for future teachers



Teaching materials for future Chukchi teachers

Doctoral dissertation
of M. Dunn

- In English
(impossible to read
for the majority of
students)
- Abounds in modern
linguistic jargon

A Grammar of Chukchi

Michael John Dunn

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

of

Australian National University

May 1999

What else is available

- ▮ Students' zero competence in language
- ▮ Variation aspect
- ▮ Students' unfamiliarness with linguistic jargon

What issues should be considered when designing Teacher's grammar course in the minority language?

- ▮ As students cannot speak the language, grammar must go hand in hand (or be just a supplement for) practical language teaching materials (conversational course books)

Students' zero competence in language

- ⌘ Variation must be discussed in the preface but excluded from the main text
- ⌘ Another option: to design a separate grammar for each dialectal variant

Variation

- ▮ Basic concepts can be introduced through the comparison with the dominant language (Russian)

Unfamiliarness with
linguistic jargon

Russian

Я (Я) хоч-у

Want-1sg.pres

спать

sleep

two words

Chukchi

ҫәм (ҫәм) тә-н-јәтqen-ҫә-ркән

1sg-desid-спать-desid-ipfv

one word

‘I want to sleep’

Desiderative



Thank you!