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## THE INFLUENCE OF RUSSIAN ON THE ESKALEUT LANGUAGES

Though adapted and adopted into these Alaskan languages, this Russian element is still rather distinctive and felt as such. So, in this intimate way, speakers of Alaskan languages are still daily reminded of the Russian legacy.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this contribution is to present a brief overview of the linguistic effects that Russian influence has caused on the Eskaleut (a.k.a. Eskimo-Aleut) languages.<sup>2</sup> I seek to stimulate the curiosity of the reader rather than to offer an in-depth treatment of the topic. It is with this goal in mind that references will be kept to a minimum (data-oriented works will be given priority).

There exist very good general surveys, albeit none of them approach Eskaleut as a whole: some of them focus on Eskimo data, others on

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<sup>1</sup> M. Krauss, *Alaska Native Languages in Russian America*, in: B. Sweetland Smith, R.J. Barnett (ed.), *Russian America: The Forgotten Frontier*, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma 1990, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> The Eskaleut family is traditionally divided in two branches: Eskimo (a.k.a. Inuit-Yupik) and Aleut. The Eskimo branch in its turn is made of two groups: Yupik and Inuit-Iñupiaq. Some authors have expressed doubts regarding the taxonomic position of Sirenik in the traditional model and have suggested to move it up to the same level as Yupik and Inuit-Iñupiaq (see, *i.a.*, N. Vakhtin, *Sirinek Eskimo: The Available Data and Possible Approaches*, “Language Sciences” 1991, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 99–106). Russian and Eskaleut have very different typological profiles. Illustrated with first-hand data, M. Fortescue (*The Eskimo-Aleut language family*, in: A.Y. Aikhenvald, R.M.W. Dixon (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Typology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017, pp. 683–706) offers a brief but up-to-date presentation of the Eskaleut languages from the standpoint of typology.

Aleut.<sup>3</sup> The reason for doing this is that Copper Island Aleut (a.k.a. Mednyj Aleut) is a mixed language<sup>4</sup> and therefore, being regarded as an oddity, it is dealt with separately. Though admittedly this approach has its merits, in this contribution I will discuss Eskimo and Aleut jointly.

Equally unusual is that I will make mention of Ninilchik and Afognak, two endangered varieties of Russian used in Alaska. It could be argued that the emergence (and death) of these moribund dialects, on one hand, and the effects of the Russian influence on Eskaleut languages, on the other, constitute two different ends of the same cultural and historical events that developed in the Russian Far North and Alaska over the last two centuries and a half or so.

## 2. HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS

Severe climatic and ecological conditions in Siberia and Alaska result in these regions being sparsely populated (average population amounts to less than two persons per km<sup>2</sup>). One may well think that such conditions make highly unlikely the very existence of intense contact situations. A substantial body of literature about interethnic contact and Russian influence on the indigenous languages of the region proves to the contrary.

<sup>3</sup> See, *i.a.*, M. Krauss, *The Russian language in Alaska and in Alaskan native languages*, in: S. Wurm, P. Mühlhäusler, D. Tryon (ed.), *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin 1996, vol. II, no. 2, pp. 1209–1212, and E.В. Головкин, *Алеутско-русские языковые связи*, in: В.М. Панькин (ed.), *Контактологический энциклопедический словарь-справочник* (Вып. 1, *Северный регион. Языки народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока в контактах с русским языком*), Азъ, Москва 1994, pp. 51–58.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of mixed language (*Mischsprache*) is still far from being universally accepted. Generally speaking, “if a language cannot be classified into a language family because several essential parts point in different directions for affiliation, then a language is mixed” (P. Bakker, *Typology of Mixed Languages*, in: A.Y. Aikhenvald, R.M.W. Dixon (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Typology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017, pp. 219). See discussion in G. van Driem, *Languages of the Himalayas. An Ethnolinguistic Handbook*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, Köln 2001, vol. 1: 163–175 (pp. 166–168 on Copper Island Aleut), A. Zaborski, [review:] S.G. Thomason, *Language Contact: An Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press, Bodmin 2001, “Lingua Posnaniensis” 2003, vol. 45, pp. 191–195). The first two authors oppose the idea of mixed language, the latter endorses it. For a general commentary, see Y. Matras, *Language Contact*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 288–306.

Russians entered Siberia in the late 16th century. Outposts were established across a vast territory between the Irtysh and the Anadyr rivers to control and collect fur tax. Contact with indigenous population was necessary not only for the collection of fur tax, but also to aid Russians (mainly fur trappers and traders, the well-known промышленики) to move around. It has been claimed that by the end of the 17th century there were as many Russian settlers as indigenous peoples in Siberia, although the former ones were concentrated in the southern part of Western Siberia, where climate is benign and the land more fertile.

Russians took control of Alaska in the 1740s. They began with the invasion of Attu (one of the Aleutian Islands) in 1745, after that they established themselves on Kodiak Island in 1783 and then moved to Sitka in 1800. The influence of the Russian Orthodox Church grew slowly but steadily in the region.<sup>5</sup> The Russian presence and influence in Alaska officially ended in 1867 when they sold the land to the United States. However, the Russian Orthodox Church remained in Alaska along with some Russian speakers of mixed descent who settled in the Kenai-Ninilchik area. It seems that the number of ethnic Russians in Russian America never exceeded one thousand.

The linguistic configuration of what would become the Russian Far North and Alaska before Russians set foot on those territories includes languages from at least six families: Yukaghiric, Tungusic (Ewen), Turkic (Yakut or Sakha), Chukchadal (a.k.a. Chukcho-Kamchadal), Eskaleut, which is divided between Asia (hence the label “Asiatic Eskimos”) and North America, and Athabaskan (exclusively in North America).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The success of this institution was facilitated by the presence of an indigenous population speaking Aleut-based and Yupik-based creoles (see, *i.a.*, L.T. Black, *Russians in Alaska, 1732–1867*, University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks 2004, p. 214–219). For the early history of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska, see L.T. Black, *Russians...*, p. 223–231 or V. Ivanov, *The Russian Orthodox Church of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands and its Relation to Native American Traditions. An Attempt at a Multicultural Society, 1794–1912*, Library of Congress, Washington 1997.

<sup>6</sup> M. Krauss, *Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present, and Future*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 1980 is generally considered the best introduction to the linguistic diversity of Alaska for non-specialists. Equally informative summaries are two other works by the same author: *The Eskimo Languages in Alaska, Yesterday and Today*, in: B. Basse, K. Jensen (ed.), *Eskimo Languages. Their Present-day Conditions. “Majority Language Influence on Eskimo Minority Lan-*

The term Asiatic Eskimo was coined in the 19th century to cover three different ethnolinguistic entities<sup>7</sup>:

- (1) Sirenik (Russian сиреникский, this language is unintelligible to other Yupiit<sup>8</sup> speakers);
- (2) Chaplino (Russian чаплинский), one of the two dialects of Central Siberian Yupik along with St. Lawrence Eskimo (St. Lawrence Island now belongs to the United States of America);
- (3) Naukan (Russian науканский) or East Cape Siberian Yupik.

In the 1930s it was decided that Chaplino would be the standard on which to build the official Asiatic Eskimo language (this obviously benefited speakers of Central Siberian Yupik, but posed serious difficulties to those of Sirenik and Naukan Eskimos).<sup>9</sup>

The Asiatic Eskimos shared territory with the Chukchi for centuries.<sup>10</sup>

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*guages*", University of Aarhus, Aarhus 1979, pp. 37–50 and *Alaska Native Languages in Russian America*, in: B. Sweetland Smith, R.J. Barnett (ed.), *Russian America: The Forgotten Frontier*, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma 1990, pp. 205–213). For more detailed accounts, see Black, *Russians in Alaska...* and I. Vinkovetsky, *Russian America. An Overseas Colony of a Continental Empire, 1804–1867*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Г.А. Меновщиков, *Эскимосы*, in: М.Г. Левин, Л.П. Потапов (ed.), *Народы Сибири*, Издательство Академии наук СССР, Москва, Ленинград 1956, p. 934 or Г.А. Меновщиков, *Язык эскимосов Берингова пролива*, Наука, Ленинград 1980a, pp. 6–21.

<sup>8</sup> Singular *Yupik*, plural *Yupiit*. Note that the apostrophe in Central Alaskan Yup'ik (vs. Central Siberian Yupik or in the generic name of the group Yupik) indicates gemination of /p/ (see, i.a., S.A. Jacobson, *A Practical Grammar of the Central Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo Language*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 1995, p. 4).

<sup>9</sup> For the sake of illustration regarding the proximity of the three Asiatic Eskimo varieties, see lexical comparisons in Меновщиков, *Язык сирениковских эскимосов. Фонетика, очерк морфологии, тексты и словарь*, Наука, Москва–Ленинград 1964a, pp. 22–25) or the trilingual texts in Н.Б. Вахтин, *Материалы по эскимосской диалектологии* (I), in: *Лингвистические исследования. Проблематика взаимодействия языковых уровней*, Ленинград 1988, p. 60–67 and В. Богоразь, *Материалы для изучения языка азиатских эскимосов*, "Живая старина" 1909, vol. 2–3(70–71), pp. 187–190. The latter provides also a Chukchi translation.

<sup>10</sup> R. Zgusta (*The Peoples of Northeast Asia through Time. Precolonial Ethnic and Cultural Processes along the Coast between Hokkaido and the Bering Strait*, Brill, Leiden, Boston 2015, pp. 263–279) presents the history of Asiatic Eskimos in the general context of the Northeast (Eurasian) region. The ethnolinguistic configuration of the Asiatic Eskimos has been studied from a diachronic viewpoint by Krupnik and Členov in a series of papers (И.И. Крупник, М.А. Членов, *Динамика этнолингвистической ситуации у азиатских эскимосов (конец XIX*

The effects of linguistic contact permeate the three Eskimo languages.<sup>11</sup>

Contacts with Asiatic Eskimos would not be established until the first third part of the 18th century. It was at that time that the study of Eskaleut began as part of the task of researching Russian America. This was achieved under Catherine the Great's reign. It is also thanks to her that Russians did not suffer isolation and established very solid international collaborations, especially in Germany. The most successful expedition was led by the English Captain Billings.<sup>12</sup>

The Eskaleut languages under Russian influence in Alaska<sup>13</sup> include: Aleut (unintelligible to speakers of Eskimo languages), Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, and in a much lesser degree, Iñupiaq in the Seward Peninsula, the westernmost member of the Inuit branch.

Generally speaking, the first linguistic contact between indigenous populations and Europeans took place in the context of trade (with whalers, fur traders, etc.) or exploration. In the second half of the 19th century, the Chukotka coast was regularly visited by explores' ships and commercial whaling ships. English was the preferred lan-

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в. 1970-е гг.), "Советская этнография" 1979, vol. 2, pp. 19–29 or М.А. Членов, И.И. Крупник, *Динамика ареала азиатских эскимосов в XVIII–XIX вв.*, in: Н.И. Толстой (ed.), *Ареальные исследования в языкознании и этнографии (язык и этнос)*, Наука, Ленинград 1983, pp. 129–139).

<sup>11</sup> The most authoritative work on this topic is W.J. de Reuse, *Siberian Yupik Eskimo. The Language and Its Contacts with Chukchi*, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City 1994.

<sup>12</sup> И.С. Вдовин, *История изучения палеоазиатских языков*, Изд-во АН СССР, Москва 1954, p. 83–105, 126–141, provides a basic introduction to the historiography of Eskaleut linguistics in Russia (cf. Е.Э. Бломквист, *История изучения в России языков североамериканских индейцев (из архива МАЭ)*, in: Д.А. Ольдерогге, Р.В. Кинжалов (ed.), *Из культурного наследия народов Америки и Африки*, "Сборник Музея антропологии и этнографии" 1975, vol. 31, pp. 99–104, 107–109). It includes a brief biographical sketch of Father Ioann Veniaminov (1797–1879, born Ivan Evseevich Popov, named Veniaminov after the Bishop Veniamin of Irkutsk, for the reception of his work in Russia by his contemporaries, see P. Hallamaa, *Father Ioann Veniaminov—A Self-taught Scholar from the Aleutian Islands*, in: J. Janhunen, A. Parpola (ed.), *Essays on the History of Oriental Studies in Honour of Harry Halén*, Studia Orientalia 97, Helsinki 2003, pp. 25–39). М. Krauss (*The Eskimo Language Work of Aleksandr Forshtein*, "Alaska Journal of Anthropology" 2006, vol. 4, no. 1–2, pp. 114–132) evaluates the achievements, but especially the failures, of two remarkable figures of those initial stages: V. Bogoraz (1865–1936) and his student A. Forshtein (1904–1968).

<sup>13</sup> It goes without saying that the influence of Russian in Alaska is not restricted to the Eskaleut languages. Most Athabaskan languages spoken in the area bear witness to this influence too. Near 300 Russian loans have been documented in Tanaina, and at least 100 in Koyukon (M. Krauss, *The Russian language in Alaska...*, p. 1210).

guage for communication with the indigenous populations. Pidgins recorded in old word lists were the result of these first contact situations. There is some scanty evidence supporting the existence of an Eskimo-based jargon used for communication with the Chukchi and other Eskimo groups characterized by a large quantity of Chukchi loans, particles and personal pronouns.<sup>14</sup> It has been speculated that the Eskimo of the Kotzebue area, in Num, could have used a sort of pidgin to communicate with the Russians, but there is no material evidence supporting this assumption.<sup>15</sup>

At that point Russian was not an integral part of the indigenous everyday life. In the Russian Far North everything dramatically changed for the negative in the 1920s with the beginning of the Soviet rule period.<sup>16</sup>

This stands in sharp contrast with the situation in Alaska. There is in general a positive appreciation for the role played by the Russians regarding the native languages of Alaska.<sup>17</sup> It was thanks to the

<sup>14</sup> On Eskimo pidgins and other related issues, see, *i.a.*, W.J. de Reuse, *Chukchi, English, and Eskimo: A survey of jargons in the Chukotka Peninsula area. (Soviet Far East)*, in: E.H. Jahr, I. Broch (ed.), *Language contact in the Arctic: Northern pidgins and contact languages*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin–New York 1996, pp. 49–55, and H. van der Voort, *History of Eskimo interethnic contact and its linguistic consequences*, in: S. Wurm, P. Mühlhäusler, D. Tryon (ed.), *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin 1996, vol. II, no. 2, pp. 1066–1082 or, by the same author, *New light on Eskimo Pidgins*, in: A.K. Spears, D. Winford (ed.), *The structure and status of pidgins and creoles*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1997, pp. 373–394.

<sup>15</sup> H. Van der Voort, *History of Eskimo...*, p. 1073. There are numerous pidgin and creole varieties for which no linguistic data whatsoever has been collected or found. This is especially true of those cases where Russian acted as a lexifier language (N. Smith's well known annotated list of creoles, pidgins and mixed languages of 1995 contains some examples of such ghost varieties, see, *i.a.*, D. Stern, *Russische Pidgins*, "Die Welt der Slaven" 2002, vol. 47, p. 7 or, by the same author, [Rezension:] E.B. Перехвальская, *Русские пиджины*, Алетейя, Санкт-Петербург 2008, "Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages" 2012, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 197).

<sup>16</sup> See, *i.a.*, N. Vakhtin, *Linguistic situation in the Russian Far North: Language loss ad language transformation*, in: O. Miyaoka, M. Oshima (ed.), *Languages of the North Pacific Rim*, Osaka Gakuin University, Kyoto 1997, vol. 2, pp. 164–166, Н.Б. Вахтин, *Языки народов Севера в 20 веке: очерки языкового сдвига*, Дмитрий Буланин, Санкт-Петербург 2001.

<sup>17</sup> It has been claimed on various occasions that cursing and swearing rooted among the Aleuts through bilinguals with Russian as their second language (see, *i.a.*, J. Ransom, *Aleut linguistic perspective*, "Southwestern Journal of Anthropology" 1946, vol. 2, p. 54 or, by the same author, *The Aleut Language and Anthropol-*

efforts of ecclesiastical figures that writing systems were devised for these languages (the first book to be ever published in any Alaskan language, i.e., in Aleut, contained so many mistakes that its author, Father Ioann Veniamonov, destroyed it, and it is only known by reports).<sup>18</sup> Important phonological features (velar vs. uvular consonants, the /ŋ/ sound [spelled *ng*], the voiceless *l*, the fourth vowel *e*, etc.) were recognised before they would be incorporated by the Danish tradition, which had worked with Greenlandic almost a century.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN ESKALEUT LANGUAGES<sup>20</sup>

#### 3.1. LEXICAL INTERFERENCE

There are more than 800 Russian loanwords in Aleut, 550 in Alutiq, nearly 200 in Central Alaskan Yupik,<sup>21</sup> and 15 in Iñupiaq.<sup>22</sup> They naturally cover all the cultural concepts that were unknown to speakers of Eskaleut languages. However, there are also unexpected areas

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*ogy*, "Explorers Journal" 1966, vol. 44, no. 3, p. 168). It has been reported (e.g. by W. Bogoras, *The Eskimo of Siberia*, "Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History" 1913, vol. 12, part 3, pp. [440–441]) that among the Chaplino Eskimo certain English swearwords were incorporated via imitation into songs as a humorous device, there is no evidence that they were used beyond that context, therefore the Aleut and the Chaplino cases cannot be compared as equals in regarding the earliest adoption of swearing from a second party.

<sup>18</sup> Krauss, *Alaska Native Languages in Russian...*, pp. 205, 207.

<sup>19</sup> Ironically enough, the adoption of writing has been seen by some as one of the policies that paved the way towards acculturation (this opinion was well spread already in the early days of the 20th century, see, *i.a.*, J.E. Ransom, *Writing as a Means of Acculturation among the Aleut*, "Southwestern Journal of Anthropology" 1945, vol. 1, pp. 333–344, where it is argued that the Aleut became literate, thus surrendering their traditional culture, when writing was divorced from religion, as this was an activity tightly associated with everything related to the Russian Orthodox Church).

<sup>20</sup> Language data is reproduced as in the source or normalized according to current standard orthographies.

<sup>21</sup> One reason why Central Alaskan Yup'ik was not more severely affected by Russian is due to the limited natural resources that could be exploited on the Bering Strait. Lack of gold, sea otters or bowhead whales makes the place little attractive for entrepreneurs. Russian influence began to be very strong in the second half of the 19th century, only after the Russian-American Company entered Central Alaskan Yup'ik territory in the 1830s.

<sup>22</sup> See map in Krauss, *The Russian language in Alaska...* and A. Berge, L. Kaplan, *Contact-induced lexical development in Yupik and Inuit languages*, "Études/Inuit/Studies" 2005, vol. 29, no. 1–2, pp. 292.

where Russian penetrated. For example, in Copper Island Aleut, Russian numerals have been borrowed following a rather odd pattern.<sup>23</sup> From 1 to 5 Aleut numerals have been retained, but higher numerals are basically Russian: *atáqan* ‘1’, *alax* ‘2’, *sicin* ‘4’ (along with *cetære*, of Russian origin), *atun* ‘5’, but *vúsim* ‘8’, *dvacat* ‘20’, *tis’aca* ‘thousand’. All ordinal numerals are Russian (*pervi*, *treeti*, *vas’moi*, etc.). Also interesting are the following words found in Alutiit: *lisnaaq* ‘extra’ < лишній, *plastiq* ‘forgive’ < простить, *taarum* ‘good for nothing’ < даром.<sup>24</sup> They are used as expressive elements that most likely found their way into Alutiit via spontaneous (and very lively) conversations.

It should not come as a surprise that the presence of Russian loanwords in Eskaleut languages has received a good deal of attention. Ironically enough, research in this particular area did not begin in Russia, but in Denmark, with two contributions by L.L. Hammerich.<sup>25</sup> We owe to him the first observation of what can be

<sup>23</sup> I.A. Sekerina, *Copper Island (Mednyj) Aleut (CIA): A Mixed Language*, “Languages of the World” 1994, vol. 8, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> J.J. Brenckle, *Russian Influence on Native Alaskan Culture*, “Slavic and East European Journal” 1975, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 421–424 and, by the same author, *The Asiatic Eskimo Language and Russian since 1917*, in: T.F. Magner (ed.), *Slavic Linguists and Language Teaching*, Slavica Publisher, New York 1976, pp. 164–183.

<sup>25</sup> L.L. Hammerich, *Russian loan-words in Alaska*, in: *Proceedings of the 30th International Congress of Americanists (Cambridge, 18–23 August 1952)*, Royal Anthropological Institute, London 1952, pp. 114–126 and *The Russian Stratum in Alaskan Eskimo*, “Word” 1954, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 401–428. The study of Russian loanwords in Eskaleut may have been instrumental in breaking the ice between Russian scholars and other specialists around the world (see the not-so-encouraging remark from Krauss [*The Eskimo Language Work...*, p. 114] about later Russian-American relations in the domain of Eskimology). As is well known, for many years Russians worked in isolation. When Menovščikov, the *doyen* of Eskimo studies in Russia (who could not leave the country to attend international meetings for fear of politic persecution), received some publications from abroad, he took advantage of this opportunity to push forward the field by introducing the new views and opinions. He reviewed Hammerich’s work (Г.А. Меновщиков, *Русские заимствования в языке эскимосов в Аляске*, “Вопросы языкознания” 1956, мо. 2, pp. 124–126) and soon afterwards initiated a series of studies on the lexical influence of Russian on Eskimo. After all, he was theoretically better equipped for the task: Russian was his native language and Eskimo data was waiting, so to speak, in the backyard. Two far more penetrating contributions followed Hammerich’s review (Г.А. Меновщиков, *О влиянии русского языка на развитие эскимосской лексики*, in: *Вопросы развития литературных языков народов СССР в советскую эпоху*, Изд-во АН Казахской ССР, Алма-Ата 1964, pp. 33–338 and, by the same author, *Русские лексические заимствования*



called “the Bering Strait paradox”, that is, rather counterintuitively Central Alaskan Yup’ik contains many Russian loanwords, whereas Central Siberian Yupik has instead a significant number of words coming from English.<sup>26</sup> As explained in the previous section, this curious distribution is nothing else but the linguistic outcome of the past geopolitical configuration of the area.

English		Siberian Yupik		Alaskan Yup’ik		Russian
<i>butter</i>	→	<i>para</i>	→	<i>masslaq</i>	→	ма́сло
<i>table</i>	→	<i>tipelek</i>	→	<i>estuuluq</i>	→	сто́л
<i>rope</i>	→	<i>waapa</i>	→	<i>milu’wkaaq</i>	→	верё́вка
<i>calendar</i>	→	<i>kalanta</i>	→	<i>cill’aq</i>	→	число́ ‘date’
<i>steam</i>	→	<i>estiima</i>	→	<i>palagg’uutaq</i>	→	парохо́д
<i>twine</i>	→	<i>tuwaaya</i>	→	<i>pelacinak</i>	→	полоте́нце ‘towel’
<i>Christmas</i>	→	<i>Kuusma</i>	→	<i>Alussistuaq</i>	→	Рождество́
<i>cow</i>	→	<i>kaawa</i>	→	<i>kulvak</i>	→	коро́ва
<i>watch</i>	→	<i>waasek</i>	→	<i>sass’aq</i>	→	часы́

Table 1. English and Russian loanwords in various Yupik varieties.

в языках аборигенов Аляски и Алеутских островов, “Языки и топонимия” 1980, vol. 7, pp. 107–115). In the meantime, D.S. Worth (*Russian in Alaskan Eskimo*, “International Journal of American Linguistics” 1963, vol. 7, p. 72–79) published his own ideas on the issue while analysing the obscure vocabulary of Charles Lee (*Aleutian Indian and English Dictionary. Common Words in the Dialects of the Aleutian Indian Language as Spoken by the Oogashik, Egashik, Anangashuk and Misremie Tribes Around Sulima River and Neighboring Parts of the Alaska Peninsula*, Lowman & Hanford Stationery & Printing Co., Oogashik 1896), which contains 80–90 Russian loanwords. Among all of them, noteworthy is <bassie pa> ‘thank you’ (from спасибо). Later contributions add little to the general picture established by these two scholars. There is little or nothing to recommend in Koo’s analysis of Russian loanwords in Aleut (*On Russian Loanwords in Aleut Eskimo*, “Russian Language Journal” 1980, vol. 34, № 117, pp. 83–100) and Yupik (*Russian loanwords in Yupik Eskimo*, “Gengo kenkyū” 1982, vol. 82, pp. 91–105), both studies being marred with numerous mistakes and faulty transcriptions.

<sup>26</sup> L.L. Hammerich, *The Russian Stratum...*, p. 418. Table 1 is based in S.A. Jacobson, *A Practical Grammar of the St. Lawrence Island / Siberian Yupik Eskimo Language*, 2nd edition, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 2001, p. 56.

In the course of time knowledge of Russian improved among speakers of native languages. They began to adopt Russian words without trying to naturalize them, rendering certain phonotactic restrictions unnecessary. This is how new variants appeared, e.g. Siberian Yupik *kaawa* replaced *kaaku*, Alaskan Yupik *pilu'wkaa* stands along *milu'wkaa*, *cass'aq* changed into *sass'aq* or *kuluvaag* into *kuluvak*. We could formulate the general statement that the older the borrowing, the higher the degree of adaptation. Put differently, judging by the number of adaptations it is sometimes possible to make an informed guess regarding the antiquity of a given loan.<sup>27</sup> Generally speaking, the closer we get to the early 20th century, the less adaptation is required.<sup>28</sup> Note, however, that equally important is where the loanword is attested. There are certain locations where Russian had a greater (and faster) impact on the native population, therefore the correlation between time and number of adaptations looks different.

The four lexemes in Table 2 illustrate the correlation that exists between naturalization and relative chronology in Aleut.<sup>29</sup> It is claimed that early Russian loanwords, up to the 1940s, were nativized into Aleut phonology, while more recent loanwords keep their Russian phonemic and phonotactic structure:

	лопатка [lɐ'patkə]	баня ['banʲə]
1805	<i>luhmaatka</i>	
1838-1840	<i>lu(h)maatxi-</i>	
1860	<i>uraatxi-</i>	

<sup>27</sup> See, i.a., Г.А. Меновщиков, *О некоторых социальных аспектах эволюции языка*, in: *Вопросы социальной лингвистики*, Наука, Ленинград 1969, p. 122–123 and Krauss, *The Russian language in Alaska...*, p. 1211.

<sup>28</sup> Many paradoxical situations are due to the scarcity of documentation. In Wells and Kelly's 1890 vocabulary of North Alaskan Iñupiaq there are two unassimilated Russian loanwords: ⟨Chy⟩ 'tea' and ⟨Do'bra⟩ 'sufficient' (*English-Eskimo and Eskimo-English vocabularies*, Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland 1890, p. 43b, 49b), from чай and добро, respectively. The naturalized variant of the former (*sayuq*, *saayu*, etc.) will be recorded only at a later date.

<sup>29</sup> Bergsland, *Aleut Dictionary. Unangam Tunudgusii*, 2nd edition, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 2001, pp. 258b, 276b, 360b, 387b.

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	лопатка [lɐˈpatkə]		баня [ˈbanʲə]
1909	<i>luvaatki-</i> <i>luvaat(a)ka-</i>	1909	<i>taana-</i>
1948	<i>luhmaataka-</i>		
1952	<i>luhmaatika-</i>	1950	<i>vaana-</i> <i>baana</i>
	табак [tɐˈbak]		серебро [sʲɪrʲɪˈbro]
1778	⟨Тамас⟩		
1840	<i>tamaaka-</i>		
1909	<i>tavaaka-</i> <i>tamaaka-</i>	1832	<i>silimla</i>
		1870	<i>siribra-</i>
1978	<i>tahmaaka</i>	1973	<i>siri(i)vra-</i>
1982	<i>tabaaka</i>		

Table 2. Russian loanwords in Aleut through time

The most remarkable change concerns *m-* and *-hm-* (aspirated voiced nasal), which in spite of some resistance, are progressively replaced by the new sounds /p/, /b/ and even /v/. It is important to bear in mind that Proto-Eskimo \**m-* and \**p-* correspond to Aleut *h-*, \**-p-* to *-hm-* and \**-v-* and \**-m-* to Aleut *-m-*.<sup>30</sup>

There are alternative explanations for the existence of variants. The irregularities described for some of the earliest Russian loanwords in Siberian Yupik can be accounted for if the assumption is made that they were not borrowed directly from Russian, but via Chukchi, e.g. *egglipagh-* ‘Russian sourdough bread’ ← Chukchi *ql-ewan*, *qlɛp* ← хлеб, or *saqaare-* ‘(granulated) sugar’ (< \**saqaare-*) ← Chukchi *caqar*, plural *caqartə* ← cáxар.<sup>31</sup> In connection to the latter,

<sup>30</sup> K. Bergsland, *Comparative Eskimo-Aleut phonology and lexicon*, “Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne” 1986, vol. 80, pp. 69–70.

<sup>31</sup> This explanation works as long as we have evidence of a given Russian word in Chukchi. Otherwise we need to accept that they may come directly from Russian (in spite of the irregularities), e.g. *peluuse-* ‘saucer’ ← блю́дце, *samiwagh-* ← самовáр, or *maghhuurka-* ‘leaf tobacco’ ← махóрка W. de Reuse, *Siberian Yupik Eskimo...*, pp. 301, 361–362).

Krauss comments that in the St. Lawrence dialect of Siberian Yupik inherited lexical items (and loanwords alike) had regularly /č/, but this sound was replaced by /s/ in the 1970s (the absence of /č/ is unique to this language within the Yupik group).<sup>32</sup> In the materials collected in the 1900s by the Russian ethnolinguist Vladimir Bogoraz (a.k.a. Waldemar Bogoras) there still are clear traces of /č/. Therefore, the sound change /č/ > /s/ is not restricted to loanwords and it is not due to a relaxed approach of recent years towards the adaptation of Russian words, as in Alaskan Yup'ik *cass'aq* > *sass'aq* above.

Although the overwhelming majority of borrowings are nouns, there are some cases involving verbs. For example, in Copper Island Aleut we find *muuchi-l*, *gula-l*, *kacha-l* or *miti-l*, which come from мучить, гулять, качать and мести, respectively.<sup>33</sup>

Be that as it may, generally speaking we have a good understanding of the synchronic and diachronic phonology of the Eskaleut languages, therefore it is a rather simple task to recognize foreign elements (not so much intra-Eskaleut borrowings). Consequently, some dictionaries list loanwords separately.<sup>34</sup> Dictionaries of St. Lawrence and Naukan<sup>35</sup> do not include individual sections on Rus-

<sup>32</sup> M. Krauss, *St. Lawrence Island Eskimo Phonology and Orthography*, "Linguistics" 1975, vol. 152, p. 47.

<sup>33</sup> Е.В. Головкин, *Алеутско-русские языковые связи*, in: В.М. Панькин (ed.), *Контактологический энциклопедический словарь-справочник...*, p. 54, Bergsland, *Aleut dictionary*, p. xxxvii. Although usually not mentioned in general surveys, personal names are sometimes naturalized too (W.J. de Reuse, *Eskimo Names*, in: E. Eichler, G. Hilty, H. Löffler, H. Steger, L. Zgusta (ed.), *Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft. Namenforschung. Proper Name Studies. Les Noms propres*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1995, pp. 975–977 or K. Bergsland, *Ancient Aleut Personal Names. Kadaangim Asangin / Asangis. Materials from the Billings Expedition 1790–1792*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 1998, pp. 57, 188–189).

<sup>34</sup> For Central Alaska Yup'ik, see S.A. Jacobson, *Yup'ik Eskimo Dictionary*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 1984, pp. 679–685, for Aleut see Bergsland, *Aleut dictionary...*, pp. 657–662. At least in Aleut there may be some loanwords disguised as words that are traditionally considered to be of unknown origin. For example, Atkan Aleut *laani-* 'fast-running' (documented only once in 1987, see Bergsland, *Aleut dictionary...*, p. 254a), I suggest, could be from English *run* [rʌn], with regular /r-/ → /l-/ (suggesting that it may be a rather old loanword), *i*-epenthesis, and /a/ for /ʌ/ (vowel length due to stress placement).

<sup>35</sup> S.A. Jacobson (ed.), *A Dictionary of the St. Lawrence Island / Siberian Yupik Eskimo Language (Second Preliminary Edition)*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 1987 and, by the same author, S.A. Jacobson (ed.), *Naukan Yupik Eski-*

sian loanwords, but offer etymological information as part of the *lemmata*. Unfortunately, we lack comparable tools for Sirenik, Alutiq or Chaplino.

Naturalization of the Russian loanwords in the initial stages of massive borrowing is a common trait all over Siberia and the Arctic region and derivation by regular morphological means soon generated a rich new vocabulary.<sup>36</sup> Inuit and Yupik speakers have expressed on different occasions and in various forums their preference for new vocabulary based on native words rather than calques, borrowings and the like.<sup>37</sup> However, for many years the official policy in the Russian Far North was to adopt unaltered Russian words. This also changed in the course of time. The new vocabulary created to fulfil administrative necessities is so cumbersome that Eskimos have problems understanding such monstrous expressions like the following<sup>38</sup>:

- (1) заявлеҕуситинкункайуситыҥыкайутытылтыҕа-мун  
заявлеҕусит=инкун=кайуситы-ҥы-кайуты-лтыҕа-мун  
application=in.order.to=help-VRB-MOD-NOM.ACT-PRT-DAT  
'application for pension benefits'

This (deverbal) nominal formation means lit. 'application to get the help' (the verbalizer -ҥы- has the general meaning 'to acquire N') and derives from Russian заявление 'application'.

Golovackaja, using data from Chaplino, has aptly summarized the different mechanisms which can be recognized in the systematic adoption of Russian words as well as in the creation of new ones.<sup>39</sup>

If directly adopted, Russian words show various degrees of adaptation or no adaptation whatsoever. Other mechanisms include

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*mo dictionary*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 2004 (= С. жейкобсон [ed.], *Словарь языка науканских эскимосов*, Центр Изучения Языков Коренного Населения Аляски, Фербенкс 2004).

<sup>36</sup> P. Skorik, *Social Functions of the Soviet Northern Peoples' Languages*, in: D.R.F. Collins (ed.), *Arctic Languages: An Awakening*, UNESCO, Paris 1990, p. 78.

<sup>37</sup> See, *i.a.*, A. Berge, L. Kaplan, *Contact-induced lexical development...*, p. 293.

<sup>38</sup> Н.Б. Вахтин, *О влиянии русского языка на эскимосский в области синтаксиса...*, pp. 25–26 and *Языковые контакты...*, p. 351.

<sup>39</sup> Т.П. Головацкая, *Классификация русских лексических заимствований в скимосской учебной и художественной литературе (1930-1960-е гг.)*, "Известия Российского государственного педагогического университета имени А.И.Герцена" 2008, vol. 38, no. 82(1), pp. 127–131, cf. Berge, Kaplan, *Contact-induced lexical development...*, pp. 293–299.

relexicalization (e.g. Chaplino вык originally ‘washcloth made of grass’, now ‘rag, towel’ or акын originally ‘(wooden) headrest’, now ‘pillow’) and coinages of various types which may or may not make use Russian as a point of departure, e.g. calques like Chaplino ақылқамавик ‘guest-house’ < ақылқама- ‘to sojourn, visit’ + locational -вик (= Russian гостиница) or ақлыяғаңлыяғвик ‘refrigerator’ < ақлыяға ‘(severe) cold’ plus actional -ңлыяғ- and locational -вик, lit. ‘where the freezing takes place’ (cf. Russian холодильник) or hybrids like хлебыңлыяқта ‘baker’ < хлеб ‘bread’ with the linking vowel -ы- plus actional -ңлыяғ- and agent -та, lit. ‘the one making bread’.

There also are hybrid formations like Naukan Yupik *saayepate* ~ *saayepan* (= сәйыпаты ~ сәйыпан) ‘kettle; teapot’, from Russian чай ‘tea’ and English *pot*.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes it is not entirely possible to establish the donor language, e.g. Naukan Yupik *sekeriıq* (= сыкырйқ) could be from English *cigar* or Russian сигáра (cf. *sekeriise* ~ *sikeriise* = сыкырйсы ~ сикырйсы ‘cigarette’, which can only be derived from English<sup>41</sup>). It is thanks to our understanding of the adaptation rules to English or Russian that we now can affirm that Siberian Yupik *Amaraka-* ‘America’ and derived forms like *Amarakaghmi-* ‘American’ must come from English, as we would expect \*\*Amirika- if they had been borrowed from Russian.<sup>42</sup>

Relexicalization and coinage are the most pervasive mechanisms used in recent times.

### 3.2. INTERFERENCE IN PHONOLOGY

Russian loanwords brought with them sounds and phonotactic patterns very unusual and atypical from the viewpoint of the Eskaleut languages. Once the period of naturalization had come to an end, speakers did not have other choice but to assimilate them. The most spectacular example comes from Aleut, where the empty slots like those of the bilabials /p/ and /b/ or the rhotic /r/ were quickly filled, e.g. *Paasxa-x̂*, from Пáсха, etc. (see examples above).

When bilingualism became the rule rather than the exception, the phonological inventory of Eskaleut was subjected to modifications

<sup>40</sup> S.A. Jacobson, *Naukan Yupik Eskimo dictionary...*, pp. 182 = 140.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 192 = 148, 154.

<sup>42</sup> W. de Reuse, *English loanwords...*, p. 59.

via reduction or internal reorganization. The result is that phonemes specific to Eskaleut turn(ed) marginal in the speech of the younger generation, being merged with other phonemes or simply lost. Thus, Asiatic Eskimo  $\text{ɕ̥i̯}̄\text{ŋ}̄\text{χ}̄\text{t}̄\text{y}̄\text{ɕ}$  '(he/she) coughs', with a very characteristic labialized uvular /q<sup>w</sup>/ (here spelled ⟨ŷχ⟩<sup>43</sup>), becomes  $\text{ɕ̥i̯}̄\text{ŋ}̄\text{t}̄\text{y}̄\text{ɕ}$ , since there are no labialized consonants in Russian. By the same token, uvulars become free variants of velars and ultimately disappear. The same confusion has been reported in Copper Island Aleut.<sup>44</sup> Also in this variety typical Aleut sounds like /ð/ and the aspirated realizations of /ŋ/ and /w/ have been lost.

A general tendency that can be observed across the entire Eskaleut territory under Russian influence is the interpretation of vowel length as dynamic stress according to the Russian system.<sup>45</sup>

Curiously enough, even in the mixed language of the Copper Island Aleuts, it remains unclear to what degree Russian phonological traits preserved in Russian borrowings, such as palatalization of consonants, vowel reduction or final devoicing of stops, have been actively incorporated to the Aleut element of the language or they are just fossilized specific realizations.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Н.Б. Вахтин, *Тематический словарь эскимосского языка. Учебное пособие для старших классов школ, педагогических колледжей, вузов*, Дрофа, Санкт-Петербург 2003, p. 194, cf. *qiiqw* in M. Krauss, *St. Lawrence Island Eskimo...*, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> E.V. Golovko, N.B. Vakhtin, *Aleut in contact: the CIA enigma*, "Acta Linguistica Hafniensia" 1990, vol. 22, p. 101.

<sup>45</sup> Н.Б. Вахтин, *Языковые контакты и русско-эскимосская грамматическая интерференция*, in: Н.Б. Вахтин, Е.В. Перехвальская (ed.), *Сборник статей к 60-летию Евгения Васильевича Головки*, "Acta Linguistica Petropolitana" 2013, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 349–350. Although the question has not been explored, it can be safely said that Russian accentology did not produce or interact in any thinkable way with Sirenik vowel reduction in non-stressed position, which had been well on its way before Russians reached Sirenik territory. While vowel reduction is the main outcome of stress patterns in both Russian and Sirenik, it seems that similarities are due to chance (superficial typology) rather than to historical processes that would have taken place during a period of intense contact. The negative assessment of the impact of Russian accentology on Sirenik holds true for the particularities of Naukan accentology too (M. Krauss, *Sirenikski and Naukanski*, in: M. Krauss (ed.), *Yupik Eskimo Prosodic Systems: Descriptive and Comparative Studies*, Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC Research Paper 7) Fairbanks 1985, pp. 175–190).

<sup>46</sup> See, i.a., S.G. Thomason, *Mednyj Aleut*, in: S.G. Thomason (ed.), *Contact Languages: A Wider Perspective*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1997, p. 456, and R. van Gijn, *The phonology of mixed languages*, "Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages" 2009, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 100–101.

Eskaleut loanwords do not reveal much information regarding the Russian language itself, hence the impossibility to specify what variety of Russian served as major donor. It has been observed that the vocalism of Russian loanwords in Aleut can be characterized as showing *okanie*, whereas in the remaining Eskimo languages there is a predominance of *akanie*.<sup>47</sup> Although *okanie* is one of the most conspicuous features of Northern Russian, which is the variety that spread over the Russian Far East, the opposition is not systematic and for some items we have doublets, e.g. Central Alaskan Yup'ik *kunkii-k* and *kankii-k* 'skates', from *ко́ньки́* (plus dual *-k*). Furthermore, other salient features of Northern Russian phonology like for example diphthongization of stressed /e/ and /o/ (pronounced [ye] and [wo], respectively), *cokanie* (the merger of /c/ with /č/ in /c/), or the assimilation and optional contraction of *VyV*-sequences are not represented in any especially significant way in the Russian vocabulary which was borrowed into Aleut (or for that matter into any other Eskaleut language). The assumption that the phonology of Russian loanwords in Eskaleut is a direct reflect of a mixture of dialects seems far more natural and likely than to stick to a rigid ascription for which there is little linguistic evidence or historical motivation.

### 3.3. INTERFERENCE IN GRAMMAR

It has been remarked on numerous occasions that the creation of Russian-type subordinate clauses by introducing Russian connectors or modifying inherited material to replicate Russian structures (especially in the case of concessive and temporal sentences where the inclusion of negatives is necessary) ranks among the most remarkable features that could help define Siberia as a linguistic area.<sup>48</sup> This is a clear tendency across the continent and Eskimo is not oblivious to it.

In the specialist literature there are also a few mentions of the apparent shortening of words in the Eskaleut languages during the

<sup>47</sup> See, *i.a.*, M. Krauss, *The Russian language in Alaska...*, p. 1211, cf. M.B. Bergelson, A.A. Kibrik, *The Niničik variety of Russian: Linguistic heritage of Alaska*, in: A. Mustajoki, E. Protassova, N. Vakhtin (ed.), *Sociolinguistic Approaches to Non-Standard Russian* ("Slavica Helsingiensia", vol. 40), Department of Slavonic and Baltic Languages and Literatures, Helsinki 2010, p. 304.

<sup>48</sup> See, *i.a.*, G. Anderson, *Towards a typology of the Siberian linguistic area*, in: Y. Matras, A. McMahon, N. Vincent (ed.), *Linguistic Areas: Convergence in Historical and Typological Perspective*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2006, pp. 276–277.



last decades. In 1960, J. Greenberg published the results of his cross-linguistic research on word length.<sup>49</sup> He famously concluded that the longest words in the world are found in the Eskimo languages. However, in a series of papers that span almost 30 years,<sup>50</sup> Vakhtin has been arguing that Asiatic Eskimo words are shorter due to Russian influence. He compares folklore texts recorded in the early 20th century with texts recorded by him in the 1970s. In the statistical analysis he also incorporates data from everyday conversations and radio programs transcripts, also from the 1970s. He concludes that, if we put aside neologisms (which tend to be very long coinages, see ex. 1 above), Yupik words are substantially shorter now than a century ago and that the main cause is bilingualism with Russian.

While it is not entirely clear what mechanisms are at play in the case of word shortening, the influence of Russian on the grammar of various Eskaleut languages is more than obvious. For example, it has been reported<sup>51</sup> that the Asiatic Eskimo resultative in -*ña*- has been reinterpreted as Russian passive clauses by young bilinguals who overtly introduced the agent (ex. 4) with instrumental -*мың*, which the original Eskimo construction does not require (exx. 2–3):

- (2) Амик маҳқат**ña**қ.  
 амик маҳқат-ña-қ  
 animal lock-RES-3SG  
 The locked animal.
- (3) Амқуйгык укини**ña**қ ағнам (also: ағнам**мың**).  
 амқуйгык укини-ña-қ ағна-м (ағна-мың)  
 shirt sew-RES-3SG woman-ERG (woman-INSTR)  
 The shirt sewed by the woman.
- (4) Ағвиғат сүпық**ña**т Илокам**мың**.  
 ағвиға-т сүпық-ña-т Илока-мың  
 laundry-PL lather-RES-3PL Iloka-INSTR  
 The laundry was/has been lathered by Iloka.

There are no traces of such interpretation in data from the 1950s, when Russian influence was still not very strong.

<sup>49</sup> J.H. Greenberg, *A Quantitative Approach to the Morphological Typology of Language*, “International Journal of American Linguistics” 1960, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 178–194.

<sup>50</sup> See, i.a., Н.Б. Вахтин, *О влиянии русского языка на эскимосский в области синтаксиса (количественный анализ)*, in: *Лингвистические исследования. Синтаксический анализ разносистемных языков*, Москва 1979, pp. 22–26 and, by the same author, *Языковые контакты...*, pp. 350–354, and *Linguistic situation in the Russian Far North...*, pp. 170–173.

<sup>51</sup> Н.Б. Вахтин, *Языковые контакты...*, pp. 357–358.

Another consequence of Russian influence is the increasing use of redundant pronouns.<sup>52</sup> The same form of Eskaleut pronouns can carry out various functions corresponding to different cases in the Russian inflection or even to different sets of pronouns. Note the use of хўаңкута ‘we’ (whose absolutive and ergative forms are identical) as index of possession in ex. 5 (along the proper possessive ending -вут) or as object in ex. 6 (along the proper object ending -кут):

- (5) хўаңкута вождывут  
 хўаңкута вожды-вут  
 we.ABS chief-1PL.POSS  
 ‘out chief (< Russian вождь)’
- (6) уңипамсюгутинкут хўаңкута  
 уңипамсюг-ут-ин-кут хўаңкута  
 tell-BEN-3SG.A-1PL.O we.ERG  
 ‘(he) told us’

Cumulative effects of Russian influence produce texts like ex. 7, which in correct Eskimo would sound as in ex. 8:

- (7) Ынтақун апнғақақа, — акитамалғи лъңа  
 ынтақун ап-нғақ-а-қа акита-ма-лғи лъңа  
 INTRJ ask-FUT-3SG.O-1SG.A answer-PST-PRT.3SG he  
 ‘“So let me ask”, he answered’  
 (in Russian: Дай-ка я спрошу, — ответил он)
- (8) акитамалғи: ынтақун аплғақун  
 акита-ма-лғи ынтақун ап-лға-қун  
 answer-PST-PRT.3SG INTRJ ask-IMPT-1SG.Ax3SG.O  
 ‘(he) answered: “So let me ask (this)”.’

The deviations from ordinary Eskimo observed in ex. 7 are of various types: the inversed order of sentences is unnatural, the use of the third person pronoun subject (лъңа) is unnecessary (3SG participial -лғи would suffice), as is the calque of the Russian future (спрошу) instead of the proper imperative construction in Eskimo with -лға- which requires an entirely different set of personal endings (in this case -қун).<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Н.Б. Вахтин, *Русско-эскимосская интерференция в ранних письменных текстах*, in: В.Ф. Выдрин, Н.В. Кузнецова (ed.), *От Бикина до Бамбалюмы, из варяг в греки. Экспедиционные этюды в честь Елены Всеволодовны Перехвальской*, Нестор-История, Санкт-Петербург 2014, pp. 134–135.

<sup>53</sup> Н.Б. Вахтин, *Русско-эскимосская интерференция...*, p. 138.

How profound are the effects of Russian influence in the Eskaleut linguistic world can be best seen in the nearly extinct mixed language of Copper Island Aleut (or CIA henceforth). Copper Island is one of the two Commander Islands, the other one being Bering Island. They are the westernmost territory of the Aleutian Chain and the closer to Kamchatka. The Aleut dialect used on Bering Island, while presenting traces of Russian influence, is basically ordinary Aleut.<sup>54</sup>

For the sake of illustration I will reproduce below two texts in CIA. They are taken from.<sup>55</sup> Aleut has been rewritten in standard orthography,<sup>56</sup> Russian elements are in bold and reproduced as in the source.<sup>57</sup>

*Maamkang sugaǵniil divjatnaacat goodax̄tal safseem tin uku-lachaal, yapoonskii paraxoodax̄ tamaaǵaal, alignan uyaaǵaali, uyaax̄taali husakayachula chalaali, vraachaḫ chalaachaali. Vraachaḫ maamkang ukuḫtaal, ukuqangi budit u niyo haqaat, tol'ko agalugin huzung budit iqilaat, Pravda agalagaa maamkang ukuqangi sibja aqachaali, a agalugin huzung i ikilaali.*

My mother was young, she had 19 years old, when she became totally blind. A Japanese steamboat arrived, old people travelled, they went off. They travelled for a while, they arrived [somewhere] and brought back a doctor. The

<sup>54</sup> Е.В. Головки, Н.Б. Вахтин, А.С. Асиновский, *Язык Командорских алеутов. Диалект острова Беринга*, Наука, Санкт-Петербург 2009, pp. 17–31. An excellent summary of postcolonial events on the Aleutian Islands and their linguistic impact on Aleut can be consulted in A. Berge, *Origins of Linguistic Diversity in the Aleutian Islands*, “Human Biology” 2010, vol. 82, no. 5–6, pp. 572–578.

<sup>55</sup> Е.В. Головки, *Материалы для изучения языка медновских алеутов (II)*, in: *Лингвистические исследования. Структура языка и его эволюция*, Москва 1989, p. 69.

<sup>56</sup> According to Bergsland, *Aleut dictionary*, pp. xvi–xxiv.

<sup>57</sup> Quite exceptionally, there are two sets of data available for CIA. The first one was gathered by Menovščikov in the 1960s (see, *i.a.*, Г.А. Меновщиков, *Алеутский язык*, in: *Языки народов СССР*, т. 5: *Монгольские, тунгусо-маньчжурские и палеоазиатские языки*, Наука, Ленинград 1968, pp. 386–406, and *О некоторых социальных аспектах эволюции языка*, in: *Вопросы социальной лингвистики*, Наука, Ленинград 1969, pp. 110–134.). The second one corresponds to Golovko and Vakhtin’s work (see, *i.a.*, Н.Б. Вахтин, *Некоторые особенности русско-алеутского двуязычия на Командорских островах*, “Вопросы языкознания” 1985, no. 5, pp. 35–45, Golovko and Vakhtin, *Aleut in contact...*), which began in 1982. Thomason (*Mednyj Aleut*, p. 449) explains that the time gap of twenty years or so between the fieldwork sessions of Menovščikov, on the one hand, and Golovko and Vakhtin, on the other, may account for the occasional discrepancies between one data set and the other.

doctor examined my mother, she recovered the sight, but all her teeth fell out. That's true, after she recovered the sight, all her teeth fell out.

*ya ibaḡaal uuxozam huzugan ilingi ya ibaḡaal ya ting ayugniił Piščaanam ilagaa inachaal Gliinkam ila ibaḡaḡiił. axtiyaḡ qalaḡiił skool'ko uxtan ti ni tiniyiš uxtan huzuga kungi mazaayiš taakze tabyaḡ qalaḡiił tooze skool'ko uxtan ti ni tiniyiš stool'ko ti buiš tabyaḡ mazaat. vaapšče qaḡ qalaḡi[i]ł tagda patamu šta uuxozam huzungi ilingi ayx-aasin u[u]li i anḡaḡinan kaazdyj uuxozam ila uuli atdeel'ni brigaadaḡ.*

I fished, in all *ukhoz* I fished. I started in Peschanka and finished in Glinka. There was a lot of cod, you fish as many as fish hooks you prepare. There was also a lot of pikeperch, also you catch as many as fish hooks you prepare. Back then there was a lot of fish, that's why in all *ukhoz* there were boats and people, in every *ukhoz* there was a separate brigade.

At first glance, CIA resembles very much the “macaronic language” unconsciously used by bilingual children in other regions of Siberia where we find basically the reverse situation: Russian plays the role of lexifier and the indigenous language contributes most of the grammar (sometimes improperly used).<sup>58</sup> The following examples come from Ewenki,<sup>59</sup> one of the Tungusic languages spoken in Siberia and the Russian Far East (Russian elements in bold):

- (9) *jur-du razde-l-i-kal*  
two-DAT divide-PST-PL-IMPT.2SG  
'(they) divided (it) in two'  
(10) *si rešy-ca-s*  
you decide-PRT.PST-2SG  
'did you decide?'

The verb in ex. 9 is inflected in Russian for tense and number (*-l-i*) in combination with an imperative ending which is ungrammatically used. Likewise, ex. 10 agglutinates the Ewenki past

<sup>58</sup> Younger speakers of Atkan Aleut, a dialect that is under heavy English influence, produce utterances like *fishizaḡ* 'he usually fishes', where English *fish* is used as a denominal verb with Aleut morphology (see K. Bergsland, *The comparison of Eskimo-Aleut and Uralic*, “Fenno-Ugrica Suecana” 1979, vol. 2, p. 12 for a curious exchange between two 18–20 years old girls where English and Aleut are mixed up). Ironically enough, the same sentence in CIA is *chaliyit* (N. Vakhtin, *Copper Island Aleut: a case of language “resurrection”*, in: L.A. Grenoble, L.J. Whaley (ed.), *Endangered languages. Language loss and community response*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, p. 319), with putative *chali-* 'to fish (with a line from land)' and Russian morphology (epenthetic *-y-* plus 3SG personal ending *-it*).

<sup>59</sup> А.А. Горцевский, *Фонетические трудности при обучении эвенков (тунгусов) русскому языку*, Изд-во Главсеморпути, Ленинград 1939, pp. 111–113.

tense marker *-ca-* and the 2SG personal ending in proper Russian. The very same kind of hybrid structures, typically associated with incipient creoles, have been documented in Sirenik:

- (11) Мам, я это кyuв-аю  
 mother me.A this pour.out-PRE.1SG  
 'Mom, shall I pour this out'

In ex. 11 the Sirenik root кyuв- 'to pour out' combines with the Russian thematic vowel *-a-* and the 1SG personal ending. Likewise, note the presence of personal and deictic pronouns (this example was recorded in 1988).<sup>60</sup>

Notwithstanding formal similarities, neither children's speech in Tungusic Ewenki nor the admittedly exceptional example from Sirenik are comparable with the situation in Copper Island. Russian influence was so pervasive there that in the end an entire new language emerged, the configuration of which is rather unique: the verbal and lexical roots are from Aleut, and the verbal inflection is from Russian. There are only two examples of this type of mixed language: CIA and the Hubner *Mischsprache* (German lexicon, Slovenian verb inflection).<sup>61</sup>

The previous texts contain examples of some of the most salient features of CIA. Russian elements can be identified without any problem in the domains of verb morphology (personal endings, past tense in *-l-*,<sup>62</sup> and the periphrastic future), connectors, and personal and reflexive pronouns. Even numerals have been borrowed from Russian (see discussion above).<sup>63</sup>

Other remarkable particularities of CIA morphology include the capability of the verb to agree with the possessor (then interpreted as topic) rather than with the possessum. In ex. 12, the possessive ending *-ning* codes 3PL possessum (i.e., the flowers) and 1SG possessor

<sup>60</sup> N. Vakhtin, *Copper Island Aleut...*, рз. 194, Н. Вахтин, *Языковые контакты...*, р. 359.

<sup>61</sup> Bakker, *Typology of Mixed Languages...*, рз. 223–224.

<sup>62</sup> The adoption of the past tense marker was undoubtedly favoured by the fact that it is formally identical to the so-called conjunctive marker in Aleut: *-l* (E. Golovko, N. Vakhtin, *Aleut in contact...*, pp. 111, K. Bergsland, *Aleut Grammar. Unangam Tunuganaan Achixaasix̂*, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks 1997, pp. 86–87). Theoretically, in certain contexts they are indistinguishable.

<sup>63</sup> The Russian component in CIA has been the object of many works (E. Golovko, N. Vakhtin, *Aleut in contact...*, pp. 107–113 and in general Sekerina, *Copper Island (Mednyj) Aleut (CIA)*, and the summary in Thomason, *Mednyj Aleut...*, pp. 455–461).

(i.e., the owner, in this particular case a woman). The verb, in past tense, agrees with the latter in number and gender (*-l-a*). In Russian, the verb agrees with ‘flowers’, hence no information is provided about who owns them.

- (12) CIA *čvetk-i-ning hula-l-a*  
 flower-PL-3PLx1SG Bloom-PST-FEM  
 Russian **МОИ** цветк-и расцве-л-и  
 my.PL flower-PL bloom-PST-PL  
 ‘my flowers bloomed’<sup>64</sup>

Predicates that lack a person-number marker are allowed to carry a non-third pronominal element. This structure is calqued in CIA using Russian pronouns, resulting the following combinations in the past tense: 1SG *-l-ya*, 2SG *-l-ti*, 1PL *-l-i-mi*, 2PL *-l-i-vi*, e.g. *ayx<sup>h</sup> ačaa-l-ya* ‘I started’, *ayx<sup>h</sup> ačaa-l-mi* ‘we started’, but *ayx<sup>h</sup> ačaa-l* ‘(he) started’, *ayx<sup>h</sup> ačaa-l-i* ‘they started’, etc.<sup>65</sup>

The only context where regular Aleut object pronouns have been preserved is in reflexive constructions (note in the second text the reflexive verb *ayugni-* ‘to move, make a move; to begin, start’ along the object pronoun *ting*). In non-reflexive contexts, Russian object pronouns have been adopted and their proper use can only be observed in regular Aleut (in ex. 13, cf. Bering Island Aleut *ting*).

- (13) CIA *ty menja hamayaax<sup>h</sup> ta-iš*  
 Russian **ТЫ МЕНЯ** спрашива-ешь  
 you me.O ask-PRE.2SG  
 Bering Island *ting ahmayaačta-ku-x<sup>h</sup>t*  
 you ask-PRE-2SG  
 ‘you are asking me’<sup>66</sup>

Heavy restructuring can be observed in various areas of the grammar. For example, negative suffixes *-laka(ĝ)-* and *-(ĝ)ula-(x)* are completely removed from the verb and analytically replaced with the Russian prefix *не-*, so that ordinary Aleut *tuta-qaĝi-laka-x<sup>h</sup>* ‘(he) does not listen’ becomes **n<sup>h</sup>i= tuta-qaĝi-it**.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> E. Golovko, N. Vakhtin, *Aleut in contact...*, pp. 106–107.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>66</sup> E.V. Golovko, *A case of nongenetic development in the Arctic area: The contribution of Aleut and Russian to the formation of Copper Island Aleut*, in: E.H. Jahr, I. Broch (ed.), *Language contact in the Arctic: Northern pidgins and contact languages*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, New York 1996, pp. 71–72. Note that CIA *hamaya-* vs. Bering *ahmaya-* is regular from the viewpoint of Aleut dialectology (Bergsland, *Aleut Dictionary...*, p. 62).

<sup>67</sup> E.V. Golovko, *A case of nongenetic development...*, p. 72.

The Russian component is practically absent from noun morphology. There are only a handful of formatives whose origin can be unambiguously traced back to Russian. For example, it has been reported that the Russian diminutive -юшк- ~ -ышк- has been adopted in CIA as *-uska-*, e.g. *agiitad-uska-kuza-ng* ‘my dear friend’, lit. ‘my little friend’, where it appears along the proper Aleut diminutive suffix *-kuza-*.<sup>68</sup>

It should be clear by now that the diverging typology profiles of Russian and Aleut (or Eskimo for that matter) did not impose special barriers.<sup>69</sup> Speaking about CIA, Comrie aptly concludes that where both source languages have fusional morphology, CIA allows fusional morphology (e.g. personal pronouns).<sup>70</sup> Otherwise, the general tendency is to integrate new elements according to the agglutinating nature of CIA by means of reanalysis of fusional morphology (e.g. verb morphology).<sup>71</sup>

#### 4. RUSSIAN IN ALASKA

Ninilchik in Kenai Peninsula and Afognak in Kodiak Archipelago are the name of two villages where a retirement center was built for Russian-American Company<sup>72</sup> employees (some of them related to

<sup>68</sup> E.V. Golovko, *Language contact and group identity: The roles of “folk” linguistic engineering*, in: Y. Matras, P. Bakker (ed.), *The Mixed Language Debate. Theoretical and Empirical Advances*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, New York 2003, p. 180.

<sup>69</sup> Needless to say, we agree with the observation that the outcomes of language contact are socially rather than structurally determined, but socially (see, *i.a.*, S.G. Thomason, T. Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1988, pp. 35–64).

<sup>70</sup> B. Comrie, *Inflectional morphology and language contact, with special reference to mixed languages*, in: P. Siemund, N. Kintana (eds.), *Language contact and contact languages*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2008, pp. 30–31.

<sup>71</sup> The question about how and why this language arose in the first place has occupied specialists for quite a long time. The aspiration for a separate identity with a salient social symbol, like a special language, seems the most likely reasons why this happened. As to how it proceeded, it has been speculated that Russian verb morphology was targeted over noun morphology because the former differs far more when compared with Aleut. Thus, it seems as if CIA was engineered to facilitate the process of learning the language for Russians who wanted to use it (see, *i.a.*, S.G. Thomason, *Mednyj Aleut*, in: S.G. Thomason (ed.), *Contact Languages: A Wider Perspective*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1997, pp. 461–466).

<sup>72</sup> J.W. Vanstone, *Exploration and Contact History of Western Alaska*, in: W.C. Sturtevant (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, Smithsonian Institution,

the same промышленники mentioned above) who opted to remain in Alaska after it was sold to the United States in 1867. The Russian language<sup>73</sup> of those who stayed is now known as Ninilchik and Afognak Russian in the specialist literature,<sup>74</sup> though native speakers (of Afognak Russian at least) seem to prefer the label “Old Russian”.<sup>75</sup>

Ninilchik and Afognak share many common traits and there is little doubt that they stem from a common source.<sup>76</sup> Both are endangered varieties with only a dozen speakers or so. The language of Ninilchik is preserved almost intact since the 1840s, not so much that of Afognak, whose speakers were rendered homeless after a tidal wave (a consequence of the Great Alaskan earthquake) struck the archipelago in 1964. Most of them relocated to the city Port Lions on Kodiak Island.

These languages have no written form, meaning that, among other things, their speakers cannot read Cyrillic, and the communicative function is restricted to few occasions (nowadays almost exclusively to phatic expressions). Dorian’s famous assumption<sup>77</sup> that a reduced use of a language leads to a reduced form of that language finds great support here.

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Washington 1984, vol. 5: *Arctic* (ed. D. Damas), p. 149–152) briefly explains the role of the Russian-American Company in (Western) Alaska.

<sup>73</sup> Ninilchik and Afognak Russian should not be confused with the Russian language brought by recent Russian immigrants settled in large cities of Alaska like Anchorage or Fairbanks during the 1990s, nor with the language of the Old Believers who, beginning in the mid-1960s, arrived to Nikolaevsk in Kenai peninsula and to various other locations on Kodiak Archipelago (see, i.a., E.V. Golovko, *Russian as a minority language...: A case from Alaskan old-settler communities*, in: В.Ф. Выдрин, Н.В. Кузнецова (ed.), *От Бикина до Бамбалюмы, из варяг в греки. Экспедиционные этюды в честь Елены Всеволодовны Перехвальской*, Нестор-История, Санкт-Петербург 2014, pp. 141–143).

<sup>74</sup> This section is based on А.А. Кибрик, *Некоторые фонетические и грамматические особенности русского диалекта деревни Нинилчик (Аляска)*, in: В.Ф. Выдрин, А.А. Кибрик (red), *Язык. Африка. Фульбе. Сборник научных статей в честь А.И. Коваль*, Европейский дом, Санкт-Петербург 1998, pp. 36–52, М.В. Bergelson, А.А. Kibrik, *The Ninilchik variety of Russian: Linguistic heritage of Alaska*, in: A. Mustajoki, E. Protassova, N. Vakhtin (ed.), *Sociolinguistic Approaches to Non-Standard Russian*, “Slavica Helsingiensia”, vol. 40, Department of Slavonic and Baltic Languages and Literatures, Helsinki 2010, p. 299–313, and E.V. Golovko, *Russian as a minority language...*

<sup>75</sup> E.V. Golovko, *Russian as a minority language...*, p. 145.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>77</sup> N.C. Dorian, *The Problem of the Semi-Speaker in Language Death*, “International Journal of the Sociology of Language” 1977, vol. 15, no. 191, p. 24.



The vocabularies of both languages contain many archaisms and colloquialisms that help to define the dialectal nature of the original Russian spoken in Alaska in the 19th century, e.g. портрет > *patret* 'picture', вчера > *fchiras* 'yesterday', теперь > *tiperya* 'now', с ангелом 'congratulation on an angel day', *iwraška* 'land squirrel', *naweska* 'garret; upstairs' (the last two typical among Russian Old Settlers of Siberia).

There is little to no contact whatsoever with standard Russian. Instead, since the Eskimo language used more prominently in the region is Alutiiq (a.k.a. Pacific Eskimo), Alutiiq-Russian bilingualism was a rather widespread phenomenon in the early days. It is generally assumed that the realization of Russian /v/ as the bilabial approximant /w/ in these varieties is the product of Alutiiq influence (since in Alutiiq there is no /v/, but only /w/), e.g. увидимся > *uwidímsa* 'see you later', швейная машина > *šwéyуnауа таšína* 'sewing-machine', so it is the loss of palatalization after /r/, e.g. тряпка > *trapka* 'rag', пряник > *pranik* 'cookie'. It is because of these features, together with the fact that in Alutiiq there are more than 500 Russian loanwords, that perhaps some speakers believe that *piwa* 'beer', *čufli* 'slippers' or *tačka* 'wheelbarrow' are of Alutiiq origin (*piwаq*, *cuuflik*, *taackaa*), instead of putative Russian words.

Ninilchik and Afognak show traces of recent English influence, most notably in the areas of phonology (Russian /r/ has become a retroflex and the voiceless velar fricative /x/ sounds like the voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/) and lexicon, e.g. *kara* 'car', *stampa* 'post stamp', *gazalin* 'gasoline' (Afognak *letučka* 'plane', lit. 'the one flying', should be counted as innovation).

The complete loss of the sixth vowel /i/, and the partial loss of vowel reduction in unstressed positions (this has been replaced by regular full vowels, e.g. *wayna načal* 'the war began') and of the neutralization of palatalized consonants (*star'úha* and *n'úžnik* can be heard along *starúha* and *núžn'ik*) can be better described as the natural result of attrition rather than the effects of contact with neighbouring languages.<sup>78</sup> The same holds true for the most salient features of Ninilchik and Afognak morpho-syntax, such as analogical levelling in the verb morphology, e.g. *plakait* 'weeps', *sosait* 'sucks', *stukait* 'knocks', etc., or the loss of gender and number agreement, e.g. *moy zerkalo* 'my mirror', *belay čaški* 'white cups', *dva den* 'two days'.

<sup>78</sup> E.V. Golovko, *Russian as a minority language...*, pp. 150–151.

In sum, it is not entirely clear whether we are dealing here with new, incipient Russian varieties born in Alaska (though the comparison with CIA would not stand up to any scrutiny), or with just vanishing dialects which we happen to discover while in the middle of the attrition stage that precedes the dead.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In this brief contribution I have described key contact phenomena characterizing the linguistic interaction between Russian and Eskaleut languages across time and space.

The lexicon, phonology and grammar of various Eskaleut languages present clear traces of Russian influence. However, the degree of intensity reached its peak on the Aleutian Islands. Aleut is a very useful and illustrative language for contact studies on two accounts: the emergence of Copper Island Aleut and the scrupulous philological work carried out by the late K. Bergsland. It is thanks to his thorough and painstaking work that now we can trace the history of the 800 or more Russian loanwords recorded in Aleut.

Russian has also experienced much of what the Eskaleut languages went through under Russian rule. The immediate future of Niničik and Afognak Russian, however, seems less auspicious than the prospects of Eskaleut languages spoken on both sides of the Bering Strait.

Abbreviations: 1,2,3 = person, A = agent, ABS = absolutive, BEN = benefactive, DAT = dative, ERG = ergative, FEM = feminine, FUT = future, IMPT = imperative, INSTR = instrumental, INTRJ = interjection, MOD = modal, N = noun, NOM.ACT = nomen actionis, O = object, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PRE = present, PRT = participle, PST = past, RES = resultative, SG = singular, x = cross-reference.

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### WPLYW ROSYJSKI NA JĘZYKI ESKIMOSKO-ALEUCKIE

#### Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie najważniejszych zjawisk, które charakteryzują kontakty językowe między językiem rosyjskim a językami eskimosko-aleuckimi. Opis dotyczy śladów rosyjskich wpływów na słownictwo, fonologię oraz morfosyntaktykę tamtych języków. Najwyraźniejsze oddziaływanie można zaobserwować na Wyspie Miedzianej, gdzie w wyniku silnego wpływu rosyjskiego powstał tzw. język

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mieszany. Również omawiane będą, choć jedynie skrótowo, warianty języka rosyjskiego używane na Alasce (w przypadku tychże silny wpływ angielskiego).

José Andrés Alonso de la Fuente

### РУССКОЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ В ЭСКИМОССКО-АЛЕУТСКИХ ЯЗЫКАХ

#### Резюме

Целью статьи является представить важнейшие явления, которые характерны для языковых контактов между русским и эскимосско-алеутскими (эскалеутскими) языками. Автор характеризует следы русских влияний в лексике, фонологии, а также морфосинтактике эскалеутских языков. Самые яркие примеры влияния русского языка наблюдаются на Медном острове, где образовался смешанный язык. В статье затрагивается также вопрос существования вариантов русского языка, употребляемых на Аласке, и влияния английского языка на их грамматику и лексику.