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### THE LINGUISTIC PORTRAIT OF VACH-VASJUGAN KHANTY: RESEARCHERS, MATERIALS, METHODS

**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to survey language materials and scientific works on the Vach-Vasjugan group of Eastern Khanty with a view to their systematic presentation. This overview draws on a vast body of language data and scientific works written by linguists from Russia, Hungary, Finland and Germany among others. These materials include both published and unpublished works, for example, the archive data kept in the Laboratory of Siberian Indigenous Languages named after A. P. Dulson at Tomsk State Pedagogical University, the Research Library at Tomsk State University and field-work data of one of the authors. An extensive body of research on the Vach-Vasjugan group of Eastern Khanty covers a continuous and more-than-a-century long period. Numerous studies conducted by an international cohort of researchers over this timespan have all contributed to gaining new insights into distinctive features of the varieties in question. The focus in this article is on the history of research on Eastern Khanty, covering the period between the beginning of the nineteenth century and the present. It enables us to survey the Khanty materials produced in the course of research and to develop common strategies in presenting findings.

**Keywords:** Vach Khanty, Vasjugan Khanty, Eastern Khanty data.

#### 1. Introductory remarks

Researchers distinguish three dialect groups within the Khanty language: Eastern, Northern and Southern. Due to the fact that the Northern and Southern groups of dialects have much in common in the phonological domain, they are usually attributed to the Western group (Чепреги 2017 : 15). The varieties analyzed in this paper, namely, Vach and Vasjugan, belong to the Eastern cluster of Khanty, which is opposed to the Western one.

The varieties belonging to the Eastern group are spoken along the banks of the middle course of the Ob and its tributaries. They are named after the tributaries of the Ob river: Salym, Pim, Jugan, Agan, Trom-Jugan (Trom-Jogan), Vach, and Vasjugan rivers. For the time being, there is no unanimous opinion on the exact affiliation of Vach and Vasjugan Khanty. One group of linguists holds an opinion that these varieties form one common Vach-Vasjugan dialect of Eastern Khanty along with the Surgut and the Salym dialects (Steinitz 1980 : 8; Соловар, Нахрачёва, Шиянова 2016; Sosa 2017 : 1). However, Vach and Vasjugan Khanty have also been seen as two independent variants/dialects (Karjalainen, Vértes 1964; Хайду 1985 : 45; Honti 1988: 172). Our analysis of these varieties is grounded in the concept that the Eastern group includes the Vach-Vasjugan and the Surgut subgroups. The Vach-Vasjugan subgroup is divided into the Vach and Vasjugan varieties, which lie in the focus of this article.

The field trips undertaken in 2017–2019 to the places of residence of the Vach and Vasjugan Khanty helped to reveal that the sociolinguistic situation within the area was heterogeneous. The use of the ethnic language in communication by the Vach Khanty and its transmission to the younger generation is observed in the remote village of Korliki and the nearby ancestral lands of the Nižnevartovsk Region of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug — Jugra. In the nearest settlements — Lariak, Čehlomej and Sosnovyj Bor (the Vach river) — the number of speakers is no more than 3–5 people, and the intergenerational transfer of the ethnic language is nearly disrupted. The Vasjugan Khanty living in the villages of the Novojugino settlement in the Kargasok district of the Tomsk region have lost their ethnic language and they use Russian as the sole means of communication. Those who grew up in the language environment have turned into *r e m e m b e r e r s* (for the term, see Grinevald 2003) because their use of Khanty is rather limited: they can only say single phrases or words that designate objects and phenomena of traditional life, though they can understand spoken language. In the settlements of Novyj Vasjugan and Ozernoje in the Kargasok district the only speakers of Vasjugan Khanty belong to the old generation (Filchenko 2007 : 17–18). The last fluent speaker, P. M. Melimov, is known to have died in 2015 and none of his remaining family members speak the language. The speakers of the Aleksandrovo subdialect of Vasjugan Khanty residing in the Aleksandrovskoje district of the Tomsk region have also lost their native language skills.

Typologically, each variety of Eastern Khanty has a set of unique morphological features, studies of which were started in the 19th century and have been continued until the present time. Drawing on the published studies of Vach and Vasjugan Khanty, the authors aim to give an overview of how this research tradition was initiated and developed. This approach will highlight the evolution of studies on Vach and Vasjugan Khanty, incorporating recently obtained fieldwork data as well as the unpublished data resources kept in the Laboratory of Siberian Indigenous Languages named after Andrei P. Dulson at Tomsk State Pedagogical University and in the Research Library at Tomsk State University. The research methods used in the study are scientific description, analysis, comparison and interviewing.

## **2. Research history**

The first Eastern Khanty data was recorded by missionaries, who focused on word collecting at the turn of the nineteenth century (Gulya 1966 : 5). For example, the Research Library of Tomsk State University holds an anonymous manuscript titled “Наименования и значения астыцких туземных предметов. Рукопись: дополнение к словарю остяцкого языка” (Designations and meanings of Astyak objects of ethnic culture. Manuscript: Addition to the dictionary of the Ostyak language) in the Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts. This manuscript is believed to date from the mid-nineteenth century. This assumption is supported by an inscription on the first page of the book stating “from Mr Turbin, inventory number is 9587 in 1901”, though the donator of the manuscript has not been established. The text is written down in civil *skoropiś* that is a type of Cyrillic calligraphic handwriting used in the 19th century. The manuscript contains 245 dictionary entries, presenting lexemes from *авырне* to *янду*. It is hypothesized that the lexemes, given with their translations into Russian and commented on, are most likely from Vach Khanty.

In the second half of the 19th century researchers from Hungary (K. Pápai, J. Jankó), Finland (U. T. Sirelius), Russia (A. A. Dunin-Gorkavič) and Sweden (F. R. Martin) visited West Siberia with a purpose to obtain ethnographic, anthropological, archeological, and linguistic data. For example, Károly Pápai, an ethnographer, interviewed native speakers and recorded lexical units designating objects and tools of the national culture,

names of mythological creatures and names of national festivals (Чепреги 2017 : 21). Due to his early death, the materials are inedited, but available in the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest. His "Déli osztják szójegyzék" (Dictionary of Southern Ostyak), which is rather a word list or glossary than a dictionary, was prepared for publication by Bernát Munkácsi (1896). It introduces lexical units primarily of Vach and Vasjugan Khanty, although it also contains lexemes marked as Surgut or Jugan. The lexical units in the dictionary represent various thematic fields and are accompanied by translations into Hungarian and, partially, Russian. The glossary (totaling 57 pages) was first published in the Hungarian linguistic journal "Nyelvtudományi Közlemények". The title of the publication itself can be explained by the fact that, at that time, the Khanty dialects, common in the middle and upper flow of the Ob, were attributed to the Southern cluster (Чепреги 2017 : 21).

In the summer of 1898, János Jankó took part in a research expedition to the area and travelled along the Demjanka, Salym, Bošij and Malyj Jugan rivers. He stopped over in every settlement in the area and pedantically wrote down the Khanty names for the objects that he collected there. Later, Márta Csepregi (2000) compiled a word list/glossary based on Jankó's notes. The glossary, which includes words designating objects of Eastern Khanty culture, is an invaluable resource for the researchers of Khanty since it mentions dialectal affiliation for each lexeme.

In the same year of 1898, Finnish ethnographer Uno Taavi Sirelius (1872–1929) took an expedition to the area of two rivers — the Vasjugan and the Vach — which is the remotest eastern site where the Khanty reside. Later, the Finno-Ugrian Society published Sirelius's diary containing a German-Khanty dictionary that featured Vach and Vasjugan Khanty facts (Sirelius 1983). Sirelius's diary was translated into Russian by Tomsk ethnographer Nadežda V. Lukina (Сирелиус 2001).

The diary reveals Sirelius's strong interest in collecting Khanty lexical data. It contains numerous Khanty names for traditional ethnic household objects as well as notes meant to be included in dictionary entries later. The largest groups of lexemes represent such topics as "Hunting" and "Fishing", which allow further subdivision into sections. Apart from these topics, the Khanty words in the diary are divided into thematic groups such as "Deer Farming", "Collecting of Cedar Nuts", "Colours and Shades", "Constructions", "Clothes", "Receptacles and Containers", "Music", "Tools", "Raw materials", "Names of Trees", "Measurements for Time and Length" etc. During his second expedition to the Surgut region in 1899, Sirelius also wrote a diary, which has not been published yet and is currently kept in the manuscript collection at the National Museum of Finland (Чепреги 2017).

Aleksandr A. Dunin-Gorkavič (an ethnic Pole) was a forester by occupation. In 1880, the 36-year-old man was appointed to be a forester in the Toboľsk Province. That was when his exploration of the North began. In Toboľsk, he was not only active in the role of a civil servant and professional forester, but was also engaged in scientific, social and agronomic work. The language and culture of the indigenous peoples of the North also inspired his keen interest. The materials collected by Dunin-Gorkavič, including his seminal work "Тобольский Север" (The Tobolsk North) with a separate volume "Этнографический очерк местных инородцев" (Ethnographic Sketch of the Local Indigenous Peoples), see Дунин-Горкавич 1911 and 1995, were incorporated in numerous case studies. The Russian-Khanty-Nenets dictionary (Дунин-Горкавич 1910) is regarded as a valuable linguistic publication, which is likely to have been written to ensure communication of the civil servants with the local residents. This dictionary was later published by Kai Donner (1932) in the same volume with some other Samoyed dictionaries. In 1988, the Surgut regional administration sponsored a reprint of this dictionary (Дунин-Горкавич 1998). What makes this dictionary a valuable resource for researchers is that it contains primarily the vocabulary of Vach Khanty intermittent with a small corpus of Surgut Khanty lexemes. In 1926, the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences formally recognized Dunin-Gorkavič's status as an accredited researcher.

Summarizing the results of fieldwork contributed by the aforementioned researchers, one can conclude that initially all studies of the Eastern Khanty dialects were lexicographically oriented. The lexical corpus collected and systematized according to the dialects of Vach-Vasjugan Khanty was at the core of an extensive corpus of Eastern Khanty.

Information on the grammar of the Vasjugan variety of Khanty was first included in the reports of the Altai mission of 1887, published in 1890 (<http://elib.tomsk.ru/purl/1-426/>). Metropolitan Makarius (M. A. Nevski, born Parvitski) briefly described the language system, namely, the nominal and verbal morphology and parts of speech, and included a prayer translated into Vasjugan Khanty (Макарий 1890 : 1–16).

The linguist who was probably the first to reach the most remote settlements of Eastern Khanty was Finnish researcher Kustaa Fredrik Karjalainen (1871–1919). It can be said that K. F. Karjalainen and another Finnish philologist Heikki Paasonen (1865–1919) initiated a focused study of the Eastern Khanty language in the second half of the 19th century. They are regarded as the key figures in the studies of both the grammatical system and the lexicon of Eastern Khanty. Karjalainen had a four-year long expedition (1898–1902) to the area where the Khanty language was spoken (Schiefer 1975 : 8), during which he managed to document various language data, e.g. lexical units, texts, grammatical paradigms, myths, etc. The extensive vocabulary data collected by Karjalainen was later published in a two-volume dialectal dictionary by Y. H. Toivonen (Karjalainen, Toivonen 1948). His dictionary entries were organized in compliance with the dialectal principle: each lemma was presented with a Southern variety in the precise Finno-Ugric transcription, followed by its Eastern and Northern cognates. All words are provided with their Finnish and German translation equivalents, some words are translated into Russian, too. Each dictionary entry contains some linguistic information about the word illustrated by examples in each dialect. Karjalainen's linguistic material was later used in dictionaries prepared by two other linguists: Wolfgang Steinitz (DEWOS 1966–1993), who did not manage to visit the area populated by the Eastern Khanty personally, and Nikolaj I. Terjoškin (Терешкин 1981), who included the Vasjugan Khanty lexicon in his dictionary because those were the only Khanty whom he had not visited. Although Karjalainen's focus was primarily on the phonetics and lexicon of the Khanty language (Steinitz 1980 : 13), he was the first to write a description of the morphology of Vach, Vasjugan and Trom-Jugan Khanty, which turned out to be extremely valuable for subsequent research. Karjalainen's findings regarding the morphological features were edited and published by Hungarian researcher Edith Vértes (Karjalainen, Vértes 1964). One of the texts in Vach Khanty, recorded by Karjalainen, was published by László Honti (1979 : 69–74), another, in Vasjugan Khanty, — by József Erdódi and István Kecskeméti (1970 : 156–161). This list can be continued by Karjalainen's own work on the words for kinship in Vasjugan, Trom-Jugan, Krasnojarsk and Kazym Khanty (Karjalainen 1913). Karjalainen's contribution to the study of Eastern Khanty dialects has been considered the most reliable and complete primary source of Khanty data (Терешкин 1967 : 29).

Since the second half of the twentieth century there has been an increased interest in the grammar of the Eastern dialects of Khanty. German scholar Wolfgang Steinitz (1905–1967), who left Germany in 1934 and stayed in the Soviet Union till 1937, worked at the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Leningrad. In 1935 (from July to October), he visited the Khanty and Mansi in the north-west of Siberia and did a great deal of fieldwork among the Khanty. Steinitz's works cover the fields of etymology and grammar, and include text collections and a dictionary. Steinitz was the first to introduce the phonological methods of the Prague School into Finno-Ugric linguistics (Steinitz 1950). He regarded Vach and Vasjugan Khanty as particularly conservative in their vocalism (Wickman 1988 : 816–817). The first volume of Steinitz's Khanty etymological dictionary was published in 1966. After his death in 1967, work on 14 other volumes was completed by his students in Berlin in 1993 (DEWOS 1966–1993). In addition to

that, Steinitz's linguistic and ethnographic studies of Khanty, as well as the enormous corpus of texts he collected while interviewing native speakers in Leningrad and during his research trips to the Middle-Ob and Northern Khanty, were included in a four-volume edition of his works (Steinitz 1975; 1976; 1980; 1989). The materials were prepared for publishing by a group of his students and followers headed by G. Sauer. Vasjugan Khanty texts accompanied by their translations in German were published in the third volume of Steinitz's collected works (Steinitz 1989 : 559–573). These texts were recorded by his Khanty students at the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Leningrad in 1934–1937. Two texts "joltə ku jäsaŋ" (A story about a shaman) and "al'ivalj" (Al'ivaly) were originally narrated by Kuźma G. Natušin, a native speaker of Vach Khanty, born in Ochteufje village in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug. Hence, the varieties of these two texts found in Steinitz's volume are translations into Vasjugan Khanty made by Anna I. Ologina. In 1936, another text "käl'ij oγ" (One with a crusted head) was narrated to Steinitz by Anna I. Ologina in Leningrad, who, in her turn, had recorded it from the Obdorsk Khanty speaker Tarchov<sup>1</sup> in 1935. Two more texts "püt'käl'iγan änisäγan" (Two birds: sister with brother) and "mari" (Mari) were told by Ologina herself (Steinitz 1989 : 566). In 2014, N. V. Lukina translated some texts from Steinitz's collection, including texts in Vasjugan Khanty, into Russian, making them more accessible for a wider readership.

Since the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, studies of the grammar features of Eastern Khanty dialects have intensified.

Hungarian linguist László Honti (b. 1944) studied the Eastern dialects of Khanty during his internship at the Institute of Peoples of the North in Leningrad in the winter of 1975–1976. The speaker of the Pym variety of Surgut Khanty, who was interviewed by Honti at that time, was N. I. Terjoškin's student, A. S. Pesikova (born in 1951), while the speaker of the Trom-Yugan variety was E. I. Sopočin. Honti's contribution has led to an expansion of our general knowledge of the language. One of the most significant works by Honti is "Chrestomathia Ostiacica" (1984), in which the author incorporated materials collected by Karjalainen, Paasonen and Steinitz as well as the data obtained from Khanty native speakers in Leningrad. This chrestomathy is one of the major sources for this article, which focuses on the Vach and Vasjugan varieties of Khanty. Honti's other important contribution is the publication of texts in Eastern dialects, namely Vach, Vasjugan, Trom-Agan and Pym (Honti, Rusvai 1977 : 223–232; Honti 1978 : 127–139; 1979), as well as a description of separate dialects — Vach and Salym (Honti 1978; 1982a; 1982b; ХОНТИ 1995).

In 1970, a linguist from Germany, E. Schiefer, defended his dissertation titled "Nominalsatz und "Seins-Verbs" im Ostjakischen" in Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. The Eastern Khanty language data in the dissertation was represented by sentences in the Vach, Vasjugan, Trom-Yugan and Jugan dialects (Schiefer 1970 : 12–83). Over the following 20 years, E. Schiefer continued studying Eastern Khanty dialects paying special attention to the Vach and Vasjugan varieties (Schiefer 1980; 1984). He examined the nominal and verbal categories of Eastern Khanty dialects as well as their lexicon. Some of his research articles and monographs were co-authored by L. Schiefer (Schiefer, Schiefer 1973; 1982; 1984).

Finnish researcher Matti Liimola is known to have studied the Mansi language, and after the death Juha Artturi Kannisto he prepared for publication the richest language data on the Mansi dialects collected by Kannisto on his fieldtrip to Mansi. M. Liimola's research also involved a cognate Khanty language, namely, its Vakh-Vasyugan subgroup, the study of which is presented in the work devoted to the analysis of the Vakh-Vasyugan case system (Liimola 1971).

Thus, it can be said that from the second half of the 20th century onward, studies of the Eastern Khanty dialects have gained pace and have been directed at writing descriptive grammars of the languages and collecting empirical data. To obtain

<sup>1</sup> Initials are not indicated in the source.

a fuller picture of how complete the linguistic portrait of Vach-Vasjugan Khanty is and how its language data is represented in the base of research let us have a closer look at the research history.

### **2.1. The Vach variety**

The name associated with the studies of Vach Khanty is that of a student of W. Steinitz, Nikolaj I. Terjoškin (1913—1986) — the first linguist of Khanty origin. He was born in a Khanty yurt (nomads tent) close to the Sogom river in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and who later worked in Leningrad. Before he started studying the Vach and Surgut varieties of Khanty in the 1950s, Terjoškin had collected text samples in Nizjam, Šerkal, and Kazym Khanty, which are currently stored in the form of manuscripts (Чепреги 2017 : 27). In 1961, Terjoškin published a monograph on Vach Khanty containing a description of its grammar, texts and a concise dictionary (Терешкин 1961), which served as the basis for his doctoral dissertation (Терешкин 1967). In 1981, a dictionary containing the lexicon of Eastern Khanty (Vach, Vasjugan, Surgut and Salym Khanty, the latter displaying features of the southern group of Khanty) went out of print (Терешкин 1981). In 1997, ethnographer Viktorija I. Spodina compiled and published a Russian-Khanty and Khanty-Russian dictionary of Vach Khanty, based on the Eastern Khanty-Russian dictionary by Terjoškin (Терешкин, Сподина 1997). The data was obtained from native speakers during his expeditions along the rivers of Vach, Vasjugan, Agan, Trom-Jugan, Salym (to the settlements of Lariak, Bošoj Lariak, Korliki, Labaz-Jogan), as well as from Khanty students in Leningrad (Терешкин 1981 : 5). At the request of the Finno-Ugric Society in Finland, Terjoškin translated the unannotated texts, written down by Karjalainen at the end of the 19th century, into his native Irtyš-Konda variety of Khanty. He was also one of the first translators of Pushkin's works into the Khanty language. However, his greatest contribution is believed to be his studies of Vach Khanty and his works on the dialect are still regarded as seminal in Khanty studies.

During the times of the Soviet Union, Western scholars had no opportunity to go to Siberia and conduct research on the languages spoken there. Some Hungarian scholars, however, were able to interview Khanty persons in Leningrad (today's St. Petersburg). For example, János Gulya studied Vach Khanty in Leningrad, and in 1956—1957 he worked with three students, Khanty natives born in the settlements of Lariak, Bošoj Lariak, and Kulin-Jugol in the Nižnevertovsk region. The informants were fluent in their mother tongue (Gulya 1966 : 6), and provided Gulya with reliable grammatical and lexical data as well as texts that he later presented in his descriptive grammar of Vach Khanty (1966). Gulya's most influential work is considered to be his monograph "A mondatszerkezetek rendszere a vahi osztjákban" (1994; The sentence structure in Vach Khanty). Gulya also compiled a short glossary of Vach Khanty (1969 : 34).

L. E. Kunina continued collecting Khanty folk texts in 1999—2002. The researcher interviewed Khanty speakers living in the settlements of Čechlomej, Sosnovyj Bor, and Korliki along the Vach river. She recorded authentic folk tales and other texts narrated to her. She published a collection of texts under the title "А́ВЫ. АЛЪВЫ" (after the name of a mythological character) and provided a Russian translation and comments (Кунина 2005).

Field research of Vach Khanty has never stopped. For example, Japanese researcher S. Sosa studied the sociological situation of the eastern (Vach) Khanty in Korliki in 2006 (see Sosa 2009). Over the last three years several expeditions to Vach Khanty settlements have been carried out by researchers (V. V. Vorobeva, S. V. Kovylin, G. P. Posdejeva, and P. I. Li) from the Laboratory of Linguistic Anthropology at Tomsk State University. During the first expedition researchers worked with informants in the settlements of Lariak, Čechlomej and Korliki located on the banks of the Vach and Korliki rivers of the Nižnevertovsk region of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug — Jugra in 2017. While in Lariak the researchers were unable to meet the teacher of Khanty

language and literature M. A. Prasina, who was on holiday at that time. M. A. Prasina is the author of some works including Vach Khanty texts, a picture dictionary among others (Прасина 2003). A significant proportion of the language data collected in the village of Lariak was obtained from Jelena G. Prasina, who is a fluent Khanty speaker and a zealous carrier of the ethnic traditions. However, the most fruitful field work was conducted in the settlement of Korliki, where some families of Vach Khanty reside, namely, the Kunins, the Katkalevs, the Chochljankins, the Sigiljetovs, the Mogulčins, and the Prasins. Each family owns their ancestral lands, referred to as the camping areas of reindeer herders, the nearest is 50 kilometres away from Korliki. The settlement of Korliki is geographically isolated and hard to reach, that is why its residents have managed to preserve their traditional way of life and ethnic language. The fieldwork results are recorded fairy tales, folk and prosaic texts in Khanty, and vocabulary items unique to the Vach Khanty variety. More details about the expedition can be found on the website of the Laboratory of Linguistic Anthropology at Tomsk State University (<http://illa.tsu.ru/?p=331>).

The second expedition was sent directly to the settlement of Korliki in the summer of 2018. It enabled the researchers to resume interviewing the informants who had completed questionnaires the year before. Additionally, new informants who permanently reside at their ancestral lands were involved in the study. A significant amount of language data was obtained from Olga A. Chochljankina, Marija G. Chochljankina, Ljuboŭ G. Prasina, Arkadij S. Katkalev, Aleksej E. Kunin and Jevgenija A. Kunina, Vladimir V. Kunin, Ljudmila I. Kunina, Danil S. Kunin, Tatjana F. Katkaleva, Tamara I. Sigiljetova, Vasilij G. Kunin and Žanna A. Chochljankina (Mogulčina). While working with the informants, the researchers inferred that the bilingual ethnic speakers of Khanty who permanently reside in their tribal lands tended to speak the Khanty language at a more proficient level. That was explained by their isolated residence resulting in fewer contacts with Russian speakers. The fieldwork enabled researchers to collect language data, namely fairy tales, thematic questionnaires, and morphological paradigms, that reflect the contemporary features of the Vach Khanty variety, the lifestyle and culture of the people.

In 2019 fieldwork was carried out in the settlement of Korliki alone. In the course of work, some new texts in Vach Khanty were recorded and glossed. For example, folk narrator T. F. Katkaljova told two fairy tales: "Two birds, sisters" and "The song of a little mouse". These tales have already been published in a Khanty-Russian thematic dictionary, which also has an audio version (Каткалева 2001). Apart from the tales, the expedition outcome included questionnaires on nominal and verbal categories, on colour terms, constructions with cardinal numerals and nouns denoting paired objects, a section of the thematic dictionary and toponyms. All language data was obtained from 36 informants including both Khanty speakers well-known from previous research trips and first-timers in the role of interviewees. The collected data is expected to be studied and processed by the researchers of the Laboratory of Linguistic Anthropology at Tomsk State University. There are plans to publish annotated texts supplemented by their audio versions and audio-dictionaries on the project website (<http://lingvodoc.ispras.ru>). A part of the language data collected in 2019 and annotated by V. Vorobeva is available at (<http://lingvodoc.ispras.ru/dictionary/3568/147/perspective/3568/151/view>).

## **2.2. Vasjugan dialect**

In the 1950s and 1960s, Ljudmila I. Kalinina was collecting toponymic materials for her dissertation in the Vasjugan area. Drawing on these data, the researcher analyzed morphological, semantic, derivational and phonetic features of the toponyms in her dissertation (Калинина 1961). Along with the toponymic names she wrote down folk tales and prosaic stories told by the Khanty natives of the Vasjugan area. For instance, she recorded the folk tales "On the banks of the goddamn river", "Three sons", "Alwaly and an older

sister", "A big pike" told by I. K. Mogutajev and A. N. Bardin. The texts were transcribed (in the Cyrillic system), translated into Russian and published (Калинина 1976). These texts are Vasjugan Khanty translations of the Vach texts recorded by N. I. Terjoškin in the settlement of Labaz-Jogan on the Vach river. The translations were done by I. K. Mogutajev, U. S. Arachpajeva and A. J. Karmaševa in the village of Novyj Vasjugan in 1966. The source language for translation was Russian, as the Russian texts had been published in Терешкин 1961. The translations were first written down by L. Kalinina (Калинина 1970; 1976). These handwritten manuscripts are currently kept in the Laboratory of Siberian Indigenous Languages at Tomsk State Pedagogical University (Т. 1—3, 1956—1957). The published texts function as the key corpus used by researchers of the Vasjugan variety. Some years later, L. Honti transcribed six texts, written down by Kalinina, using the Latin system of transcription and translated them from the language of origin into Hungarian. The texts were published in the journal "Nyelvtudományi Közlemények" and supplemented by a glossary found at the end of the article (Honti 1982a). Karl Bouda compiled a glossary with an accompanying German translation for one of the tales from this collection, namely "Three Sons" (Bouda 1972 : 273—280).

A significant contribution to the studies of Vasjugan Khanty has been made by the researchers of the Laboratory of Siberian Indigenous Languages named after Andrej P. Dulson at Tomsk State Pedagogical University. They carried out a complex research project "The Issue of Origin of the Indigenous Peoples of Siberia and Their Languages" initiated by A. P. Dulson in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. The studies of Khanty were led by a well-known linguist Olga A. Osipova, who also supervised several dissertations that were case studies of Vasjugan Khanty language data (written by Nadežda N. Šalamova (Шаламова 2001), Andrej J. Filčenko (Фильченко 2002), Viktoriia V. Vorobeva (Воробьева 2002), Pavel M. Kuznetsov (Кузнецов 2004), Olga S. Potanina (Потанина 2006)). O. A. Osipova also co-authored several influential papers on the Khanty language (Осипова, Фильченко 2001; Осипова, Шаламова 2001). In N. N. Šalamova's works, which were grounded in the language data obtained in field trips to the Kargasok district of the Tomsk region in 1995, 1997 and 1999, the focus was on the language means used to express aspectual meanings of the verb.

Fieldwork was continued by other researchers from the Laboratory of Siberian Indigenous Languages. In 1992, an international linguistic and ethnographic expedition led by Hungarian ethnographer Zoltán Nagy and head of the laboratory Aleksandra A. Kim was made to the Vasjugan area. In the settlement of Pavlovo of the Kargasok district in the Tomsk region the participants of the expedition were met by Markel K. Mogutajev, a native speaker of Vasjugan Khanty, who presented his manuscript of lexical items of the indigenous language, which he had been collecting for twenty years. That event entailed a campaign to prepare his manuscript for publication. In 1996, the Khanty-Russian dictionary by M. K. Mogutajev, edited by O. A. Osipova, A. A. Kim and E. A. Sergejeva, came out of print (Морутаев 1996). What is remarkable about the dictionary is that the editors preserved the author's intuitive approach to representing lexical items of a language that had not yet developed established lexicographical and grammatical standards, as well as his choice of the most adequate translation equivalents to Khanty lexemes. These facts contribute to the value of the dictionary for linguists and ethnographers. The 1992 expedition continued along the route and reached the village of Novyj Vasjugan in the Kargasok district, and later the village of Ozjornoje in the Kolpaševo district. The field researchers recorded tales and stories "Elks", "A lad", "A legend about the harmonica", "The elk with six legs" among others told by two brothers, Sidor M. Milimov and Pavel M. Milimov, speakers of Vasjugan Khanty.

This fieldwork was continued by A. J. Filčenko. At the turn of the century, he organized and led several research trips aiming at collecting language data of Vasjugan, Aleksandrovo and Jugan Khanty. The key informant was P. M. Milimov (born in the village of Ozjornoje, but residing in the village of Novyj Vasjugan), the last proficient



native speaker of Vasjugan Khanty, who died in 2014. Some texts in Vasjugan and its subvariety Aleksandrovo Khanty recorded during the expeditions to the upper and lower Vasjugan river and to the Aleksandrovo Ob river communities in 2007 have been annotated and translated into Russian. They are currently available on the site <http://www.policy.hu/filchenko/FTG%20ELDP%20project/index.htm>. In addition to the language data, the research trips resulted in the Doctor of Philology Thesis "A Grammar of Eastern Khanty", defended in Houston, Texas (Filchenko 2007) and a monographic description of the grammar of Eastern dialects based primarily on Vasjugan Khanty (Filchenko 2010). Filchenko's monograph is the only and complete descriptive grammar of Vasjugan Khanty. An abundant collection of articles is available on his personal webpage at Academia (<http://nu-kz.academia.edu/AndreyFilchenko>). Apart from this, members of the Laboratory of Siberian Indigenous Languages published five volumes of texts representing the Ob-Jenisej linguistic area, edited by A. J. Filchenko (Аннотированные фольклорные и бытовые тексты обско-енисейского языкового ареала). The volumes contain the annotated texts previously recorded by L. I. Kalinina and A. A. Kim and translated into Russian and English. In the volume published in 2017, one can find the texts "[They] went fishing in winter" and "[He] went stomping the tracks for the sled" recorded during their own expeditions (see <http://nu-kz.academia.edu/AndreyFilchenko>). A. J. Filchenko has been supervising studies of young researchers in the laboratory; two of them, namely M. N. Топожан (Тоноян 2014) and S. V. Kovylin (Ковылин 2017) have already defended their dissertations.

The most recent language data on Vasyugan Khanty were obtained by members of the Laboratory of Linguistic Anthropology at Tomsk State University — V. V. Vorobeva, A. Košeljuk, E. V. Kovaleva and N. A. Kačín — in the spring of 2017. Their fieldwork was carried out primarily in the Novojugino settlements of the Kargasok district of the Tomsk region: in Kargasok, Novojugino, Starojugino, Bondarka, Lozunga, Boļšaja Griva. Families of ethnic Khanty reside in these settlements, for example, the Polumogins, the Angalins, the Nemelgins among others. The ethnic people have stopped using the Khanty language as a means of communication and can be described as rememberers. The researchers managed, however, to write down several ditties, nominal and verbal word forms and lexicographic material. The key informant was Antonina J. Šeffer (Angalina). The fieldwork data is available at <http://lingvodoc.ispras.ru/dictionary/906/6/perspective/906/7/view?page=1> and more detailed information about the fieldwork trip can be found at <http://illa.tsu.ru/?p=412>. The audio recorded data provided by the Vasjugan Khanty speakers have confirmed the principles of stress patterns in this dialect, revealed by J. V. Normanskaja (Норманская 2013), a researcher from the Institute of Linguistics at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

### **3. Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the research tradition focusing on one branch of the Ob-Ugric languages (the Khanty language) arose in the 19th century due to general interest in West Siberia and in the culture of indigenous peoples. This initiative has led to significant achievements in the field of Uralistics and typology because it has managed to accumulate a reliable corpus of linguistic data on various dialects of Khanty. It is worth noting that studies of the language of Eastern Khanty, spanning over a hundred years, have been constantly expanding. Initially, researchers tended to record the lexicon of the relevant dialects, as well as to collect ethnographical, anthropological and archaeological facts. This practice was soon expanded to encompass morphological and phonetic features as well. Due to these attempts, present-day researchers have access to a range of grammar books and dictionaries enabling them to do comparative analyses of the language data obtained at different time periods.

Eastern Khanty dialects are known to have been described to a varying degree of completeness. The least comprehensively described Eastern Khanty dialect is Salym,

which can be accounted for by the fact that it ceased being used as a means of communication among native speakers a long time ago. Although the Vach, Vasjugan and Surgut Khanty dialects have been better documented and researched, linguists from various countries have been going on with their studies of these dialects and have participated in numerous fieldwork expeditions to the Khanty settlements arranged on a regular basis over the last decades. As a consequence, linguists have managed to gain new insights into distinctive features of the dialects in question and have expressed the need in developing common strategies in presenting their findings.

A comprehensive study of the languages of indigenous population in various regions is currently one of the priority tasks of modern linguistics. However, it does not mean that the interest of linguists, ethnologists and anthropologists in minority languages has been caused by the threat of language death. The tradition of documentation and analysis of the languages spoken by minor and isolated speech communities goes back to older times. This fact is true about the research history of Khanty language in general and its Eastern branch as well. A continuous and more-than-a-century long research tradition had spawned a significant corpus of publications about Eastern Khanty dialects focusing on various aspects of these language systems. Joint efforts of the linguists representing different countries and scientific schools (namely from Finland, Hungary, Germany, Russia among others) have ensured great advances in the studies of the Khanty language grounded in a well-established theoretical base and data corpus. However, the steady interest of linguists in the dialects of the Khanty language, expansion of the research field and introduction of new approaches, active field work and application of digital technologies have revealed the need of systematizing the research outcomes and theoretical conclusions. It is assumed that this practice will enable researchers to navigate efficiently in the vast field of Khanty studies, to maintain the continuity of approaches and to acknowledge the contribution of individual researchers and scientific groups to studies of this minority language.

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*ВИКТОРИЯ ВОРОБЬЕВА, ИРИНА НОВИЦКАЯ, НАТАЛЬЯ ДУБРОВСКАЯ* (Томск)

#### **ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ ПОРТРЕТ ВАХ-ВАСЮГАНСКОГО ХАНТЫЙСКОГО: ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛИ, МАТЕРИАЛЫ, МЕТОДЫ**

В статье представлен обзор научных исследований языка вах-васюганских ханты. Доступные источники дают основание утверждать, что грамматический строй восточной ветви хантыйского языка исследуется уже более века. Первые грамматические заметки принадлежат финским ученым, они были сделаны во время их путешествия по сибирской земле. Заложённая традиция исследования восточного идиома была продолжена языковедами из других стран — Венгрии, Германии, России и Швеции — и исследования продолжают в наше время. Из-за того, что ханты традиционно проживали изолированно на довольно большой и часто труднодоступной территории, не все диалекты и говоры восточного идиома получили научное освещение. Проведённое исследование позволило унифицировать накопленный опыт в части истории изучения языка восточных ханты, что позволит современным хантологам выработать определённые стратегии в исследовании и представлении своих результатов.

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#### **HANDI KEELE VAHNI-VASJUGANI MURDERÜHMA UURIMISE AJALOOST JA TÄNAPÄEVASEST SEISUST**

Artiklis antakse ülevaade Vahhi ja Vasjugani murde teaduslikest uuringutest, mida Soome, Ungari, Rootsi, Saksamaa, ja Venemaa keeleteadlased on teinud pidevalt üle pooleteise sajandi, ning nende nii avaldatud kui ka avaldamata töödest ning arhiivianestikust, mis on hoiul Tomski Riikliku Ülikooli teadusraamatukogus ja Tomski Riikliku Pedagoogikaülikooli A. P. Dulsoni nimelises Siberi põliskeelte laboris. Tomskis tegutseb suur osa handi keele praegustest uurijatest. Et handid on tavapäraselt elanud üsna suurel ja sageli ligipääsmatul territooriumil, ei ole kõik murded leidnud võrdväärset teaduslikku kajastamist. Autorid kirjutavad endi ja oma kolleegide töödest, keeleainestiku kogumisest, keelejuhtdest ning Vahhi ja Vasjugani murde olukorrast ja väljasuremise ohust.