

Teaching The Even Language In A Nomadic Camp: Problems And Solutions

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Abstract

The article considers the organization of nomadic camps for indigenous peoples of the North as a factor of educational formations included in the national-regional education system of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); the analysis of difficulties encountered by the organizers in the first years of the nomadic camp when learning the native language by Even children is carried out.

For the educational system, the nomadic camp is a new form of organization of temporary association during the summer holidays as an inseparable system of teaching the native Even language in natural nomadic conditions. Children are recruited to the camp who, for objective reasons, do not have the opportunity to go to reindeer herding brigades, and thus have no idea about the traditional way of life of their people. Work experience since 2000 has shown positive dynamics in the field of preservation of the Even language and culture. Many pupils after graduating from secondary school entered various colleges and universities and subsequently joined the ranks of teachers, educators, cultural workers; some of the children remained to work in domestic reindeer husbandry.

Keywords: nomadic camp, nomadic lifestyle, indigenous peoples of the North, Evens, Even language, preservation of the native language, national traditions

Introduction

Nomadic camp is a new form of temporary educational organization during the summer holidays for the education of children of the indigenous peoples of the North – Evens (Lamuts); it is one of the varieties of small-scale educational organizations in the conditions of the North that exist in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). This type of camp is a socio-pedagogical innovation in the education system of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

Nomadic camps in Minsky district began their work in 2000 with the support of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Ministry of Peoples' Affairs of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). The first camp, "Neltenke" (Evensk. "The Sun"), was organized on the territory of the Tirektyakh river on the basis of the Choloy

reindeer herding herd and worked in this place for 2 years. In 2001, at the Indigir secondary school in the village of Buor-Sysyy, at the request of its director N.A. Bryzgalov, a nomadic ecological camp "Maranga" was organized (Evensk. "Rainbow"), who worked in the Toyon Uyalah area, and in 2002 – on the territory of the reindeer herding brigade "Berkicheh" of the Municipal Unitary Enterprise "Pobeda". The camp's students explored a vast area of their native land, studied ecology, toponymy in practice, collected herbarium, which served as an effective educational material for mastering the linguistic and cultural heritage of their ancestors. Unfortunately, after the death of the director, the work stopped.

In 2002, the ethnoecological nomadic camp "Harpanga" (Evensk) began its activity in the specially protected natural territory

"Momsky National Natural Park" near Marble Mountain. "The first rays of the sun") at Ulakhan-Chistai secondary school, which is still operating.

Main part

The main purpose of the nomadic camp is to teach children the native Even language, culture and traditional types of management in the conditions of nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle.

The main motive for the organization of the nomadic camp was the catastrophic picture of ignorance of the native language by the Evens – representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North.

The process of reducing the knowledge of the native language began in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, gross mistakes were made in the national language policy.

In the Momsky district of the Yakut ASSR under consideration, Evens mostly lived at a distance of 300-400 km from the district center, and they were so scattered that the distance between some settlements reached 1000 km [Lebedev, 1979, p. 3]. So, part of the Evens of the Eselyakh nasleg lived in the village of Sasyr, part in the village of Buor-Sysyy, Dogdo-Chybagalakhsky in the Ortho-Doydun nasleg, part moved to the village of Kubergenyia of the Aby district.

The expansion of the boarding school system with the teaching of children of the peoples of the North exclusively in Russian aggravated the situation with the deplorable state of the Even language, led to a decline in the prestige of the native language and a sharp reduction in its social functions, i.e., to its gradual withdrawal from everyday use. This was one of the main reasons for the current plight of the peoples of Siberia, the North and the Far East. It is believed that boarding schools have led to a weakening, and often to a break in the connection of generations [Eremin, 1989, p. 118], but one cannot fully agree with this statement. For example, in Yamal, local authorities did not forbid children to communicate in their native language, there was no harsh pressure on children.

The absence of a speech environment leads to the underdevelopment of the language [Chernihiv, 2021, p. 41]. So, the Even language lost its importance in everyday life, under the pressure of external circumstances, people stopped speaking their own language. Only reindeer herders who lead a nomadic lifestyle preserved their native language; they became islands where the Even language had its use and purpose. Also, many children, for a number of reasons, who roamed with their parents, preserved their language, culture and skills in traditional types of farming.

The indigenous peoples of the North received the strongest blow in 1980-1990, when rural production enterprises – state farms began to be liquidated spontaneously, which led to a significant reduction in the number of domestic deer. If in 1980 in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), then the Yakut ASSR, there were 360 thousand heads, then in 2020 their number was only about 130 thousand heads, despite the fact that domestic reindeer husbandry is a traditional type of farming Even.

Particular attention is drawn to the depressing picture of ignorance of the native language by the northern peoples. Thus, out of 22383 Evens (Lamuts) living in the Russian Federation, only 5538 people speak their native language, i.e. 25% [Rosstat, 2012, p. 89].

There are several reasons that influenced the process of reducing the assimilation of the native language by the peoples of Siberia, the North and the Far East. Firstly, it is the above-mentioned transition of nomadic peoples into a settled lifestyle; secondly, at the moment people have a prevailing opinion that without knowledge of Russian (for urban and living in the centers of districts) and Yakut (for living in remote settlements) languages it is impossible to be a cultured person. At the same time, it does not take into account the fact that ignorance of the native language, especially for a person living in his ethnic environment, is a convincing proof of the lack of culture and self-esteem; thirdly, schoolchildren often have problems in teaching their native language due to the fact

that there are different dialects in different localities, and children do not understand what is written in textbooks. Therefore, the assimilation of educational material by students has certain difficulties.

Taking into account the above, the following practical steps were taken to achieve the stated goal of the nomadic camp: 1) teaching children their native language in a local dialect, in a natural environment; 2) studying local toponyms, names of vegetation in their connection with the indigenous language of the Evens; 3) immersing a new generation of Even children in the traditional communal lifestyle and in the ancestral occupations of their reindeer herders [Sleptsov, 2010, p. 28].

During the work of the Neltenke camp, the pedagogical collective encountered the first obstacles - this is the lack of literature on traditional upbringing, games, customs and rituals related to the childhood of the Evens. Since the first camp was located on the territory of the reindeer herding brigade "Choloy", reindeer herders came to our aid. They told what games, customs, and everyday rules of behavior they had in their childhood in the nomad land. Subsequently, materials were collected from the Evens of the older generation, as well as in the archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences. As a result of these studies in 2003 the first edition describing the customs and rituals of the Evens of the Momsky district was published, and in 2004 a book was published in which the toponymy of this area was collected. The Neltenke camp worked for two years and ceased its activities due to the fact that the reindeer herding brigade ceased to exist.

In 2002, at the request of the residents of the village of Sasyr, Momsky district, a place of compact residence of representatives of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North of the Evens, an ethnoecological nomadic camp "Harpanga" was organized. Taking into account the interest of the local population, it was decided to establish a camp separately from the reindeer herders, but closer to the Evens wandering along the Tirektakh River.

The teaching of the Even language in the camp was conducted by the teacher of the Ulakhan-Chistai secondary school, E.V. Solovyova, and a native speaker of the Even language, Z.S. Sadovnikova, they were assisted by A.S. Sorkomova and N.V. Atlasova. In addition to the Even language, they taught children national sewing.

During the work of the nomadic camp, a team of teachers and mentors applied the basic criteria for the general and personal development of children, and also conducted monitoring, including continuous observation, recording, correction by teachers of certain facts and phenomena in the course of the activities of pupils characterizing their traditional ethnic identity [Neustroev, 2018, p. 32].

With the artificial creation of a nomadic lifestyle and with the relaxed communication of students in the course of the camp's activities on traditional education, with the pedagogical support of teachers and experienced reindeer herders, the children had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the language environment, original nomadic life and economic activity, which ensured the effectiveness and effectiveness of the educational process.

When teaching our native language at first, we noticed that children do not understand the spoken Even language. The students showed their textbooks by V.A. Robbek, N.I. Gladkova; we, in turn, showed these textbooks to native speakers of the Ulakhan-Chistai Nasleg language. It turned out that adults do not understand what is written in them. The fact is that all textbooks are published on the basis of the Olsky dialect, which is considered a literary language.

In the table we will consider a few words from the dialect of the Moma Evens living in the Dogdo-Chibagalakh and Ulakhan-Chistai naslegs.

Comparative characteristics of Mомsky Even dialects

Dogdo-Chibagalakhsky	Ulakhan-Chistay	Literary Word	Translation*
Төөр	Туур	Төр	Earth
Бөөрүм	Буурым	Бөрэм	I gave
УДЬЫЛ	Удил	Удьал	Footprints
Эһкы	Эксэ	Экэс	Scales
Бөһкы	Буксэ	Бөкэс	Ice

* The Russian translation is taken from the research of V.D. Lebedev [Lebedev, 1979, p. 19].

A comparative analysis of Even words showed that there are different dialects within one district; in this regard, local residents do not understand the literary language based on the Olsky dialect.

Based on the above, we immediately refused to teach children from textbooks of the Even language.

It should be noted that Vasily Dmitrievich Lebedev (1934-1982), the first Even poet and scientist, at one time sought to ensure that textbooks of the Even language were issued taking into account various dialects.

When teachers studied the primary knowledge of the Even language in children, it was noticed that they poorly assimilate it. As noted by E. Gaer, "deprived of a normal, extremely important family upbringing environment for the peoples of the North, they do not speak their native speech, which is actually foreign to them in full" [Gaer, 1994, p. 11].

A child, once in a nomadic camp, must decipher the language spoken by reindeer herders – native speakers of the Even language. The teaching of the native language in our camp was carried out as follows: the teacher and mentors showed the subjects, explained its Even name and how the subject is used, so that in the future the child could work with this material.

Toponyms play a huge role in the development of the Even language. Teachers explained the meaning of the word and told the legends associated with it. Children learned

these words-toponyms very easily. Each locality in the Ulakhan-Chistai nasleg, in addition to the Yakut name, has an Even name. Each of them has its own semantics, i.e. each natural object is assigned its own meaning. For example, passing by the Kinikich River (Evensk. "Water coming out of the ground"), children learn from the mentor's stories that two shamans once argued in this area, and that the river comes out of the ground, and sometimes, despite clear weather, a thunderstorm with lightning can descend [Degtyarev, 2005, p. 9]. Children easily remembered the names of the places where the nomadic camp's route passed, and not only learned the meaning of the name, but also learned about places unsafe for people and deer.

In order to teach children the Even language, teachers sometimes spend a lot of effort, because children must not only remember words, but also break them into parts and be able to compose whole sentences with their help.

When raising children, the Evens focus on the development of his memory. To do this, they show the reception once, sometimes twice. Even a young person should have good sensory abilities, i.e. he needs to see and hear well, while being able to process the information received.

Teachers also paid attention to the development of fine motor skills of the hands, so the girls worked with beads, and the guys wove a rope.

It is necessary to note the important role of national games in the upbringing of children. The variety of folk games among the Evens was described by the first Russian explorers. For example, J.I. Lindenau in his

work recorded ball games, various races, wrestling, etc. [Lindenau, 1983, p. 63]. Many of them modern children do not know. In our nomadic camp, a large arsenal of national games is actively used, here the guys get acquainted with their wisdom for the first time. As Margaret Mead rightly noted at the time, children's games resemble adult games in their nature, the interest they arouse, and in their relationship with work [Mead, 1988, p. 169]. The most attractive type of games children consider throwing a maute (lasso), everyone is fond of it from young to old.

It should be noted that at the moment there are no methodological manuals on the games of the Evens (Lamuts), their description and application in a wide audience.

Raising children from childhood to work was the main task of any nation. Mental, physical, moral and spiritual personal qualities of a child are formed in working activity from a young age. There is no result without difficulty [Podlasyi, 2003, p. 171].

The collapse of nomadic families in the 1950s dramatically affected the state of one of the traditional types of farming - domestic reindeer husbandry. Now it can be observed that mainly older people work in reindeer husbandry, young people are reluctant to go to work in the industry. There are several reasons for this, the main one is the loss of communication between generations. Therefore, in the nomadic camp, we try to ensure that all children undergo labor education in reindeer husbandry.

All children must be able to ride a deer. The process is difficult, but fascinating. During riding, children first of all learn how to properly mount a deer with the help of a nimkan staff. Next – to sit properly on the saddle. The saddle is very unstable, the children kept falling during the movement. But they turned all these difficulties into a game. The guys gradually developed leg stretching, learned to keep their balance. The stage is gradual, not requiring haste. It is the ability to ride a deer that facilitates the further movement of the herd and the camp.

The older children mastered the skill of properly butchering the carcass of a deer, a

snow sheep. The girls learned how to carve fish. All the children were always on duty in the kitchen, cooking food together with adults, the guys lit a fire, carried water from a river or lake. The main condition of labor education was that the children themselves had to cook food. Adults pointed out only at the beginning, then the cooking process completely switched to children, despite the fact that at first they did not know how to cook, or properly set up a tent, or make a fire, or set the table, etc.

A lot of time is devoted to learning how to ride deer. The older children, with the help of experienced mentors, mastered the skills of working in reindeer herding. Many subsequently joined the ranks of workers in the reindeer herds of tribal communities, municipal enterprises and collective farms.

One of the mandatory conditions for staying in the camp was the presence of national costumes among the children. Thanks to this, we held various holidays, such as the Evinek summer holiday [Neustroev, 2019, p. 5188]. Some guys have linked their profession with the culture of their people in the future. Many of them became members of various ensembles of song and dance of the Evens.

In addition, children in the camp learned traditional sewing, proper processing of fur, camus, deer or sheep skins [Sleptsov, 2009, p. 176]. Many pupils subsequently became winners and prize-winners in national costume competitions.

The experience of a nomadic camp can be applied in any conditions. To do this, it is not necessary to constantly move around, you can also organize a stationary camp in which children will have the opportunity to learn their native language and culture. The first condition of such a camp is the distance from the settlement. Children should be artificially removed from civilization, this ensures their concentration on the process of everyday work and learning. The pupils of the nomadic camp "Harpanga" (2002) always note at a meeting that during their stay in the camp they learned to work in nomadic conditions, which was useful in the future.

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Fund, which gave an opportunity for experiments. So, in the first season, the children worked in the ancestral community named after S.G. Sleptsov, where they learned horse riding and reindeer husbandry skills with the help of experienced mentors. Some of the guys, mostly high school students, expressed a desire to work in the brigade and stayed there until the opening of the new school year. The second season was opened in the specially protected natural area "Momsky National Natural Park" in the vicinity of Lake Ulakhan-Kuel. The children were taught fishing skills – one of the traditional types of farming of the indigenous peoples of the North. In addition, environmental education of children was carried out. Lake Ulakhan-Kuel is one of the unique natural places, it does not freeze even in winter at - 60 ° C. Migratory birds winter here: ducks, geese, swans, which for various reasons could not fly to warm countries.

As in previous years, in this nomadic camp there were mainly children from socially disadvantaged (alcoholism problem), single-parent and large families. In the 2021 season, all children were from large families, 40% were from incomplete families. In the Arctic, there is an acute social problem of single-parent families, the main reason for the collapse of which is alcoholism. Therefore, the camp focuses on a healthy lifestyle. As practice shows, some parents who see a positive result of the camp and its positive impact on the child, refuse alcohol. Many pupils remember: "If Yuri Alekseevich had not taught us and brought us up in a nomadic camp, we would probably have either become alcoholics, or we would no longer exist." Of course, this result is not 100%. Many children, despite the efforts made, have chosen a different path, and the outcome of their lives is very sad. We use this fact in education as a negative symbol. Negative symbols are images of such people who, according to the dominant point of view, caused great harm to the ethnic group by their activities [Nalchajyan, 2004, p. 159].

Conclusion

In recent years, interest in the problems of the North has been increasing in many scientific disciplines. Scientists note that the living conditions of the studied peoples have deteriorated significantly in the last 15-20 years. The most tragic thing that can happen to the indigenous northern peoples is that their language, history, and traditional way of life can disappear forever. The mission of the modern generation is to ensure that life in the North continues in its traditional rhythm and pace. Our task is to preserve the native language and original culture, traditional types of management and lifestyle of Northerners. When studying native culture, it is necessary to adhere to an indigenous approach (Indigenous Methodology) aimed at enriching science with the worldview and experience of indigenous peoples, interpretation of a deep vision of the interests and prospects of these peoples by their own scientists in order to root research approaches in favor of indigenous peoples and solve precisely those problems that concern the aboriginal population itself.

One of the ways to solve this problem is the organization of temporary children's associations – nomadic camps, which provide for the complete immersion of children in the traditional way of life and their in-depth acquaintance with the way of life, traditions and culture of their people. The activity of this type of camps leads to a positive result in the traditional upbringing of the younger generation of the indigenous peoples of the North. This experience can be applied by many ethnic groups, which will make it possible to preserve the original culture of the small peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

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