A Preliminary Study of Language Contacts around Uilta in Sakhalin[1]

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0. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to provide an outline of language contacts on Sakhalin island, especially with regard to the Uilta (formerly called Orok)[2], one of the indigenous peoples. This will provide a perspective for future linguistic studies as a key to historical research.

In what follows, we will begin section 1 with a general description of the 'Uilta' people and their language. Thereafter, we will discuss the main points of this paper, namely the interactions between the languages of Uilta and Nivkh/Ainu in section 2, Uilta and Evenki in section 3, and Uilta and Russian/Japanese in section 4.

1. The Uilta people and their language

1.1 General information about the Uilta language

Uilta is regarded as a member of the Tungusic (or Tungus-Manchu) family. According to genetic classification by Ikegami (2001a [1974]), Uilta belongs to the third group together with Nanai and Ulcha, as shown in Scheme 1.

[1] This is a revised and extended version of my paper read at the International Workshop 2009 'Hunter-Gatherer Archaeology of the Northern Pacific Rim' (Sapporo, 10–11 January, 2009), organized by the Center for Northern Humanities, Hokkaido University, BAP University of Alberta, and Hokkaido Archaeological Society. My deepest appreciation goes to my supervisor, Prof. Toshiro Tsumagari whose comments and suggestions were of inestimable value for my study. I am also indebt to the members of the project team of the Workshop, especially Prof. Hirofumi Kato. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Hidetoshi Shiraishi (Sapporo Gakuin University) whose insightful comments were an enormous help to me. This study is partly supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) (Project No. 18320061; Principal Investigator: T. Tumagari) and Grant-in-Aid for JSPS Fellows (Project No. 21002110).

[2] In this paper, we prefer the self-designation Uilta to the exonym Orok, although the latter is more often used in the literature. Similarly, we refer to Nivkh rather than Gilyak.

Scheme 1: A classification of the Tungusic Languages by Ikegami (2001a [1974]: 395)

I Evenki, Solon, Negidal, Even
II Udehe, Oroch
III Nanai, Ulcha, Uilta
IV Manchu

From a geographical point of view, the language of Uilta is spoken in the northern part of Sakhalin, while the closely related Tungusic languages, Nanai and Ulcha, are mainly spoken in the lower Amur area.

1.2 Geographical distribution and dialects

On the whole, the Uilta people inhabit the north-eastern part of Sakhalin. This group can be divided into two subgroups, both of which speak a different dialect of Uilta depending on their geographical distribution.

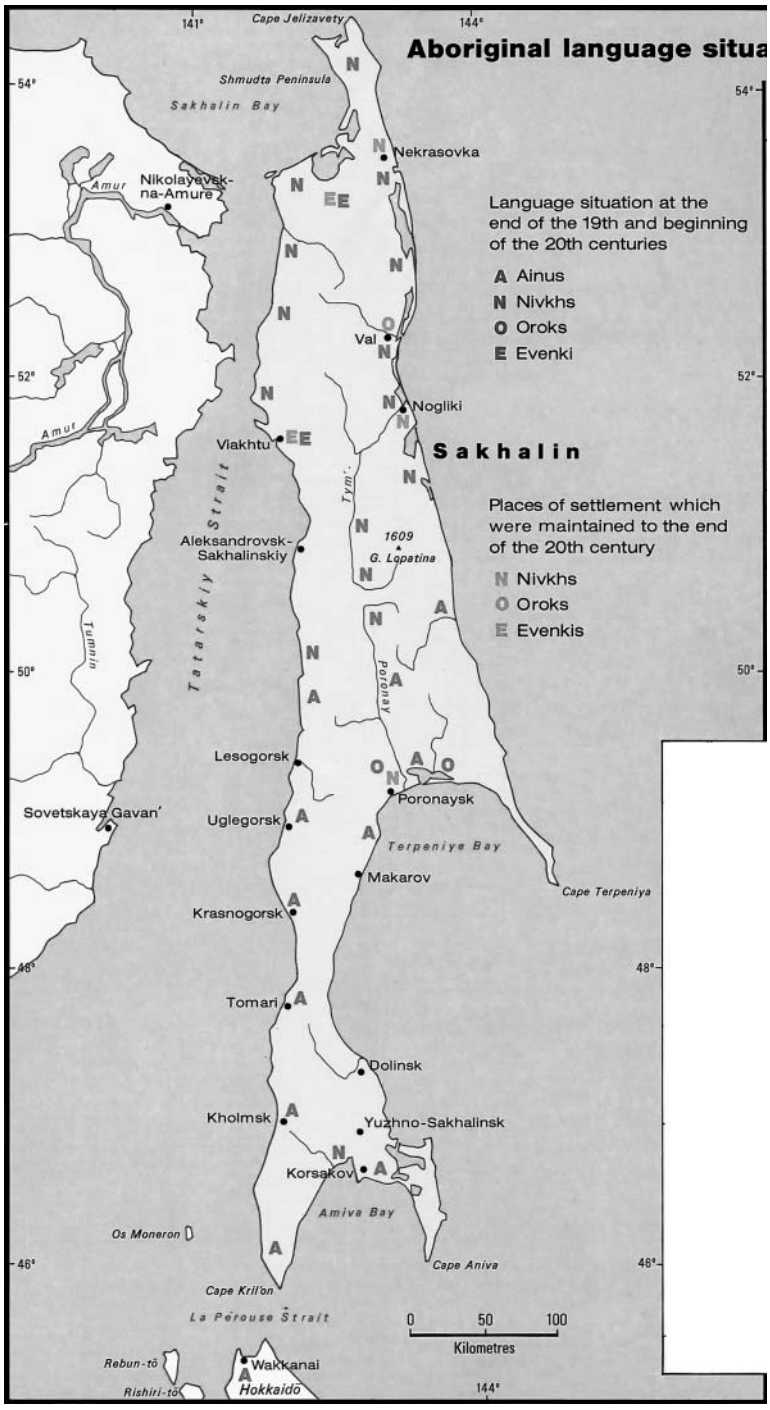
The distribution of Uilta is closely connected with their half-nomadic lifestyle, which involves reindeer herding as a subsistence economy. Roon (1996) described the distribution of their population from an ethnographical point of view, reconstructing their traditional annual migration routes since the 18th century. She divided them into two subgroups: northern and southern. According to her description, the former subgroup, called *doronneeni*, inhabited the coastal area of the Okhotsk Sea between the Shmidt Peninsula and Lun'skii Bay in the spring/summer, and migrated to the area between the North Sakhalin Plain and the East Sakhalin Mountains in the autumn/winter (Roon 1996: 13). Moreover, the latter subgroup, called *suunneeni*, inhabited the area along Terpenija Bay and the Poronai River in the spring/summer, and migrated into the East Sakhalin Mountains in the autumn/winter (ibid.: 14). Therefore, we can assume that the two subgroups are distinguishable by the areas they inhabit during the spring/summer.

Recently, SEIC (2006: 13, 15) has reported that the population of Uilta totals 387 people, according to the official data of the Sakhalin Oblast Administration for 1 January, 2005. They are concentrated in Nogliki District (mostly in the village of Val and the town of Nogliki) and Poronaisk District (ibid.: 13). These current distributions seem to reflect the Uilta people's traditional spring/summer inhabited areas, i.e. the geographical subgroups mentioned above.

Until now, it has been reported that dialectal differences exist between these two subgroups (Novikova & Sem 1997, Ikegami 2001b). These reports classified the Uilta language into the northern (or East Sakhalin) dialect and the southern (or Poronaisk) dialect. The dialectal differences are specified in the primer (Ikegami et al. 2008) as well.

1.3 The surrounding languages

As shown on **Map 1**, four main indigenous languages — Ainu, Nivkh, Uilta (called Orok on



Map 1: Indigenous language situation and contacts on Sakhalin (a part of Gruzdeva & Volodin 1996)

the map), and Evenki — were found in this area from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

The map indicates that Ainu was spoken in the southern part of the island. On the whole, its genealogy is unclear, because Ainu is genetically isolated from the other languages on Sakhalin. According to Tamura (2000: 2), the dialect spoken on Sakhalin, i.e. the Sakhalin dialect, is significantly different from the other two dialect groups, Hokkaido and Kurile. After WWII, the Ainu speakers on Sakhalin moved to various locations in Hokkaido. Against this background, no speakers of the Sakhalin Ainu dialect can be found today. Moreover, there is no statistical record of Ainu inhabitants in Sakhalin Region (SEIC 2006: 13, 15).

Nivkh (formerly called Gilyak) has been spoken on the lower Amur and on Sakhalin. Its genetic relationship with other languages is still unknown[3]. According to Gruzdeva (1998: 7), Nivkh has four dialects, i.e. the Amur dialect, the East Sakhalin dialect, the North Sakhalin dialect, and the South Sakhalin dialect. They are so different that their speakers do not understand each other (ibid.). From a geographical perspective, the Nivkh people are concentrated in the northern part of Sakhalin, and their population currently totals 2,649 (as of January 2005; SEIC 2006: 13, 15).

Map 1 also shows that the Evenki language was distributed throughout the northern part of Sakhalin at both the beginning and the end of the 20th century. This language is also a member of the Tungusic family, but belongs to a different group from Uilta (see Scheme 1 above). The Evenki dialect spoken on Sakhalin is different from other ones that are found on the continent, as far afield as Siberia, Mongolia and China (Atknine 1997: 114–117). The dialect spoken on Sakhalin is just a small part of the whole group. The current population totals 266 (as of January 2005; SEIC 2006: 13, 15).

In the next two sections, we will discuss how Uilta has interacted with each of the surrounding indigenous languages from an ethnographical perspective.

2. Language contact with Nivkh and Ainu

2.1 History

As far as the history of the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin is concerned, many issues are still unresolved. In particular, their ethnic origins have often been debated, although as yet there seems to be no consensus on the issue. This may, in part, be due to not only a lack of written materials but also problems concerning the ethnic classification of the peoples.

What is fairly widely accepted is that the ancestors of Uilta migrated to the island later than those of Nivkh and Ainu. For instance, L. von Schrenck, who investigated the lower Amur region in the 1850s, referred to the Uilta as the 'third people' on Sakhalin, who stepped into the area already inhabited by the Nivkh and Ainu (Schrenck 1881: 19). Also, L. Ja.

[3] The Nivkh language is conventionally included in Palaeosiberian (or Palaeoasiatic), a disparate group of languages spoken in different regions of Northeast Asia.

Shternberg, who visited the island in the 1890s, remarked that the people of Uilta had migrated from the Amur to Sakhalin comparatively recently, i.e. in the 17th century (Shternberg 1933: 9). It can be surmised from these descriptions that these three ethnic groups — Uilta, Nivkh, and Ainu — have inhabited the island for at least 300 years.

2.2 Geographical differences

As shown in Map 1 above, the Uilta speakers lived adjacent to Nivkh and Ainu at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, earlier remarks exist about the close contact between these three groups.

Based on his investigation in the 1850s, Schrenck (1881) reported an ethnographical situation in which the three peoples of different ethnic origins shared the territories. According to him, the Uilta inhabited an area that went deep into the Nivkh's territories in the north, while they neighboured the Ainu in the south (Schrenck 1881: 19). Much more recently, Roon (1996), also taking into consideration the annual migration process of the Uilta, stated that they did not occupy the territories of Nivkh and Ainu, but neighboured them when they settled in the area in the summer months (Roon 1996: 14).

Such remarks suggest that the three ethnic groups have lived as neighbours since the mid 19th century at the latest. This leads us to assume different aspects of ethnic contact between the north and south. The geographical difference seems to be connected with the subgroups of Uilta mentioned in 1.2. In other words, the northern Uilta possibly used to keep closer contact with the Nivkh, while the southern Uilta were in closer contact with the Ainu.

2.3 Linguistic situation

2.3.1 Interaction with Nivkh

How did these different ethnic groups communicate with each other? It is quite a difficult problem to solve from so few documents. Previous discussions also make it difficult to determine which language they used to communicate with each other.

Burykin (1996: 993) comments that Nivkh was used as a communication tool both on Sakhalin and on the lower Amur, which is a result of their 'numerically strongest nationality'. His suggestion is presumably based on the number of borrowings from Nivkh to Tungusic languages including Uilta, although the article does not refer to concrete data. On the other hand, Gruzdeva (1996) indicated a different possibility by quoting Shternberg (1908: VIII): 'the indigenous neighbours of the Nivkhs easily acquired a knowledge of all the other local languages except the Nivkh, and therefore the Nivkhs had to express themselves in Ainu, Uilta etc.' This description implies that the Nivkh themselves were actively multilingual, and their language was presumably not used as a communication tool among the indigenous peoples.[4]

[4] According to Gruzdeva (1998: 7), the linguistic influence from Tungusic languages seems to be reflected on the dialectal differences of Nivkh. She mentions, 'since the speakers of the Amur dialect of Nivkh continually lived on the continent in close contact with the Tungus-Manchu

Giving an overview of the remarks by Burykin (1996) and Gruzdeva (1996), Wurm (1996b) makes the following assumption: 'Nivkh may have been an important lingua franca in earlier times which resulted in the many Nivkh borrowings by the speakers of Manchu-Tungus languages who were the neighbours of the Nivkhs, but that the language of the latter had lost its importance as lingua franca by the beginning of the 20th century' (Wurm 1996b: 981). His hypothesis seems to quite feasibly summarize the various approaches mentioned above and gives an explanation of what may have happened in the second half of the 19th century. Thus, after the Nivkh language lost its status as a lingua franca, the Nivkh people acquired the Uilta language unilaterally until the beginning of the 20th century.

The linguistic situation between Uilta and Nivkh takes on a different aspect in the 20th century, especially in northern Sakhalin. In an observation by the present author, a speaker of the northern dialect of Uilta (born near Dagi, 1940) mentioned that most Uilta adults, including her parents, were able to speak Nivkh during her childhood[5]. She also stated that the two ethnic peoples used to converse with each other in their own language, so the Uilta understood the Nivkh language and the Nivkh understood the Uilta language. It is evident that the Uilta came to learn the Nivkh language by the mid 20th century in northern Sakhalin. On the other hand, in southern Sakhalin the linguistic interaction between the two groups seems to have remained unchanged over the years. According to Asahi (2005: 141), the Nivkh were expected to have a certain level of fluency in the Uilta language. This remark is based on the fact that Uilta was used in some classes during the era of Japanese domination, whereas Japanese was increasingly used by the indigenous people[6].

We can indeed summarize the linguistic situation in the first half of the 20th century as follows. For the first half of the century, both the Uilta and Nivkh came to acquire each other's language in northern Sakhalin, while in the south the linguistic interaction between these two groups was apparently the same as Shternberg (1908: VIII) remarked about the situation in the second half of the 19th century. However, in order to prove this hypothesis on the whole, we will need to undertake further observations, including interviews with current speakers of Nivkh.

2.3.2 Interaction with Ainu

There are some collective remarks regarding Ainu as the most important tool for inter-ethnic communication on Sakhalin (Gruzdeva 1996, Burykin 1996, Asahi 2005, etc.). Among

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peoples, it is suggested that this dialect of Nivkh is a result of an influence of Tungus-Manchu languages upon the Nivkh parent language.' Much recently, Kazama (2009: 136–141) investigated tentatively into lexical borrowing between Tungusic and Nivkh. He commented that the forms of the Nivkh words with Tungusic origin resemble mainly to the equivalent of either Ulcha or Manchu (ibid.: 140). Based on these descriptions, the linguistic influence of Tungusic on the Nivkh can be observed among the dialects distributed in the lower Amur area rather than those of Sakhalin.

[5] The interview was partly attended and supported by Dr. Hidetoshi Shiraisi.

[6] For further information, see section 4.2 in this paper.

them, Wurm (1996b: 981) summed it up: 'The Ainu language […] was an important lingua franca on Sakhalin in the 19th century, not only between members of the local populations, but also between the latter and Russians and Japanese, including many administrative officials.' Taking into the consideration the geographical distribution (see 1.3 above), these remarks seem to concern the southern part of the island in particular, where the Ainu inhabited.

The following fact relates to the role of Ainu as an inter-ethnic language. A Japanese explorer[7], who visited the island in the mid 19th century, collected Uilta words through Ainu translation (Ikegami 2002 [1971]). In his manuscript, we can find Ainu headwords (sometimes instead of Japanese ones) next to the Uilta words (Ikegami 2002 [1971]: 158; see also the manuscript in ibid.: 247).

Drawing on several historical documents, Asahi (2005: 138) reported that government officials as well as Japanese fishermen used Ainu as a means of communicating with the Ainu people in the 19th century. He concluded that the status of the Ainu language was very high during this period on Sakhalin (ibid.).

Thus, it is almost certain that the Japanese used Ainu to communicate with the indigenous peoples in the 19th century. However, we have less first-hand information to determine whether the Uilta, acquired and actively spoke Ainu. To elucidate the actual linguistic capability of the Uilta, much more investigation is required.

2.4 Linguistic area I

We can summarize the preceding sections as follows:

- Vs. Nivkh; the Uilta may have acquired Nivkh as an inter-ethnic communication tool in earlier times. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, they gave up to speak Nivkh, while the Nivkh acquired the Uilta language. Furthermore, in northern Sakhalin, they both came to acquire each other's language by the mid 20th century.
- Vs. Ainu; the Uilta supposedly acquired Ainu as an important lingua franca, although there are few remarks concerning their actual capability of the Ainu language.

On the whole, the linguistic situation among the three ethnic groups is characterized by 'multilingualism', just as Gruzdeva (1996: 1008) described succinctly. There are, however, many important questions concerning time and space. With regard to the latter in particular, there must have been geographical as well as social differences within the island, considering the ethnic distribution. This matter is well worth consideration.

In general, if more than two languages are in close geographical contact and maintain multilingualism for a long period of time, there is a high probability that they will interact and acquire some common linguistic features. In other words, they can form a defined linguistic area. Here, we will tentatively refer to the linguistic area among the Nivkh, Uilta and Ainu as 'Linguistic area I' (see Scheme 2 in section 5).

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[7] There is no signature on the manuscript, although the author is alleged to be Takeshiroo Matsuura (Ikegami 2002 [1971]: 260).

To date, there have been several studies on the linguistic interaction among the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin. These tend to refer to lexical borrowing in general. One of the most significant articles on this theme was written by Ikegami (2004 [1990]), who considered lexical borrowing among the Japanese, Ainu, Uilta and Nivkh. On the other hand, there have been far fewer attempts to compare them grammatically. We have found little evidence so far to clarify the situation of this linguistic area, perhaps because the areal-typological study has only just begun.

In addition to the areal-typological study, the present author postulates that the dialectal difference of Uilta may be a vital factor in solving the problem about language contacts on Sakhalin. Given the distribution of Uilta, the northern group must have had closer contact with Nivkh, while the southern group would have been in closer contact with Ainu. This problem is, however, also connected with influences from other languages, i.e. Evenki, Japanese, and Russian.

3. Language contact with Evenki

3.1 Evenki migration to Sakhalin

According to the following sources, the Uilta began to have close contact with the Evenki on Sakhalin in the mid 19th century.

Patkanov (1912: 88) reported that a part of the Evenki migrated from the Uda district (Primorsky Oblast) to Sakhalin in the 1860s to flee from the spread of smallpox. They wandered to the central part of the island with their own herds of reindeer, where they preferred to live in the tundra along Tatar Strait, from 'Ljangr"[8] in the north to Viaxtu in the south (ibid.). This information suggests that the Evenki have not inhabited Sakhalin for as long as the Nivkh, Ainu, and Uilta. In other words, the contact between Evenki and Uilta on the island seems to have lasted 150 years at most. This period of contact appears to be much shorter than that among Nivkh, Ainu and Uilta.

3.2 Cultural influence of the Evenki

Although the Evenki are migrated to Sakhalin much later than the other indigenous peoples, they seem to have had a considerable influence on the Uilta on Sakhalin in two significant ways.

The first concerns the similarity in economic engagement between Evenki and Uilta. While their neighbours, Nivkh and Ainu, engaged in dog-keeping, both the Uilta and Evenki engaged in reindeer herding as a subsistence economy. From this perspective, the Evenki of Sakhalin have been closely associated with the Uilta. Roon (1996: 61) states that the Evenki kept continuous contact with the Uilta, so a lot of travelers and researchers expected illusion

[8] In Patkanov (1912: 88), this place name is transcribed as 'Ljangr". It indicates presumably the place called 'Langry' today (Shiraishi p.c.).

that the two peoples are wholly similar, especially in reindeer herding. Such an 'illusion' is associated with the fact that, in 1938, a collective farm belonging to Uilta (*Nabil*) was integrated with one belonging to Evenki (*Krasnyi tungus*) to form a reindeer herding farm (Roon 1996: 160). Such external and administrative forces accelerated their continual and close contact.

Secondly, the cultural influence of the Evenki has also been variously reported. Some of these reports made during the era of Japanese domination (1905–1945), although there were few Evenki settlements[9] on Japanese territory (Karafutochoo 1997 [1932]: 343). According to Karafutochoo (1997 [1932]: 342), the Evenki introduced other peoples to methods of making clothes, houses, breads, and so on. Similarly, Nakanome (1997 [1917]: 51) commented that the Evenki surpassed the other indigenous peoples on a 'cultural level,' because they had gained much experience of the Chinese and Russian civilizations on the continent before their migration. Furthermore, Roon (1996: 86) mentions that the Uilta borrowed many tools from Evenki, such as autumnal fencing, the use of smoke as a mosquito repellent, bells, tents, etc.[10] She also states that the northern Uilta in particular became eager to increase their herds, because they considered the large herds owned by the Evenki to be prestigious. We can therefore conclude that the Evenki had a great influence especially on the northern Uilta.

3.3 Linguistic area II

The cultural influence of the Evenki is obviously reflected on the language of Uilta, which means that we can see common features between the Sakhalin Evenki dialect and the northern Uilta dialect, not only in the vocabulary but also in the grammar. We can thus acknowledge another linguistic area between the Evenki and Uilta in the north of Sakhalin. This linguistic area will be referred to as 'Linguistic area II' (see Scheme 2 in section 5).

The northern dialect of Uilta shows phonological and grammatical interference from the Sakhalin dialect of Evenki. Ikegami (2001b) based this supposition on a comparative study of Uilta and the surrounding Tungusic languages, in which he provides examples such as the order of labial and velar consonants in the intervocalic cluster, the possessive construction using the 1st and 2nd person pronoun, the verb ending *-bukki* (UilN.) < *-wki* (EvkS.), etc.

In addition, Ikegami (2001b) mentioned '*ningmaa*', a genre of Uilta folklore, to illustrate the interaction between Uilta and Evenki. Although he recorded several stories from the southern Uilta, who called the genre '*ningmaa*', it has been pointed out that the northern Uilta shares this custom and calls it '*nimngaa*' (Yamada 2009: 136). The main characteristic of this genre is the narrative and songs, which are produced one after the other. The Uilta people used to recite

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[9] Karafutochoo (1997 [1932]: 343) reported the indigenous population other than the Ainu in 1932 as follows: *Orokko* (=Uilta) 346, *Giriyaaku* (=Nivkh) 113, *Kilin* (=Evenki) 24, *Sandaa* (=Ulcha) 11, *Yakuuto* (=Yakut) 2 persons.

[10] Roon (1996: 86) remarked that the Uilta borrowed Evenki names representing the age categories of domestic reindeer. She provides two words, *mulkan* and *taragai*, as examples, although the present author has found neither actual use of these two words nor a description in dictionaries (Ikegami 1997, Ozolinja 2001).

the narrative using the Uilta language whilst singing the songs using the Evenki language[11]. It is indeed possible that the genre was introduced into Uilta folklore as a result of the cultural influence by the Evenki on Sakhalin.

We anticipate further investigation into the linguistic influence of Evenki on Uilta, which will provide us with more information about the interaction between the two peoples. To this end descriptive study will be indispensable. However, this will be hampered by the fact that these two languages are now extinct as a result of a language shift that we will discuss in the next section.

4. Language shift to Russian/Japanese

4.1 General information about the history of domination

The obvious influence from Russian began in the mid 19th century. At that time the Russian government sent a large number of exiles to the island. More and more Russians then began to settle there, and their numbers increased. On the other hand, in 1897, the indigenous peoples accounted for only 15% of the total population of Sakhalin (Vysokov 1995: 95); this implies that they were already in the minority against the Russians at that time.

After the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), the part of south Sakhalin at lat. 50°N became a Japanese colony. The Japanese dominated this territory under the Karafuto Prefecture until 1945. For some 40 years, the indigenous peoples, including southern Uilta, were forced to adapt to the Japanese culture.

After WWII, the whole of Sakhalin fell under the rule of the USSR (later known as the Russian Federation). A small number of southern Uilta people migrated to Hokkaido along with Japanese repatriation, while most stayed in the Poronai region and adapted to the Russian culture in turn.

4.2 Linguistic situation before WWII

The influence of Russian and Japanese did not reach the stage where it could cause a language shift on the Uilta until WWII, although it changed their society from the root.

As far as the northern region is concerned, the establishment of sovietism in 1925 had a tremendous impact on the whole indigenous society, and the Uilta adapted their way of life to socialism. According to Roon (1996: 159–160), they continued reindeer herding as a traditional economy and were concentrated in a collective farm (*kolkhoz*) in the village of Val. Of the Uilta population, which accounted for 90% of the whole village, only 5% spoke Russian at the

[11] According to a recent observation, the language of the songs is actually similar to the Evenki language, but it is so different that a native speaker of the Evenki Sakhalin dialect cannot understand the text. For this reason the present author considers it possible that the genre of Evenki folklore was introduced to Uilta much earlier than the Evenki migration to Sakhalin in the mid 19th century. In this case, the Uilta may have acquired the genre either from the Evenki on the continent before the Uilta migration, or from one of the other ethnic groups on Sakhalin.

end of the 1930s (ibid.: 160). Consequently, the people were educated to speak Russian. Children learned Russian at school in Nogliki from the age of 8, while adults were taught it at a special school for illiteracy (*likbez*) founded in Val (ibid.: 160). Social innovation, including systemized language education, must have changed the linguistic landscape to some extent. Gruzdeva (1996: 1009) claimed, however, that the linguistic situation of the indigenous society did not change significantly until WWII. In other words, although Russian language acquisition was effectively promoted during that period, most people seem to have kept their own native language as their first language.

On the other hand, the southern group of Uilta rapidly integrated with the Japanese during the era of Japanese domination (1905–1945). Most of them settled in a place called *Otasu*, located near today's Poronaisk, where Uilta and Nivkh lived in the same community. Their traditional economy of reindeer herding declined rapidly and almost disappeared by the end of the 1930s (Roon 1996: 159). Furthermore, the whole population was given Japanese names, and the children learned Japanese under a special education system aimed at the indigenous peoples, with the exception of the Ainu[12]. Following his study of a Uilta speaker in Poronaisk in 2004, Asahi (2005: 141) reported that Japanese was used to communicate with Nivkh speakers. Accordingly, we can assume that Japanese was already operating as a lingua franca in the inter-ethnic community of the southern region.

4.3 Linguistic situation after the War: language shift

After the War, when the Japanese surrendered the island, an active process of Russification was set in motion, which completely changed the linguistic situation. It caused a so-called 'language shift' rather than partial changes in the respective native languages. In other words, the Uilta, like the other indigenous people, replaced their own native language with the national one as a means of inter- as well as intra-communication.

In the southern region, the Uilta, who remained on Sakhalin, needed to acquire Russian as the official language. Furthermore, a very small number, who moved to Hokkaido after the War, were able to speak both Japanese and Uilta; however, their children did not succeed in acquiring the latter.

Wurm (1996a: 975) mentioned that one of the reasons for the loss of native languages in Siberia was due to the practice of raising children in boarding schools from the 1950s and 1960s. The situation on Sakhalin was no exception: it hindered the succession of language and culture in families, and children were forced to always speak Russian at school. The Uilta speaker mentioned above recounted her experience at boarding school, telling how her teacher scolded her when she talked in her native language with the other indigenous children in her class.

Moreover, social collectivization can be cited as another reason for language shift. More specifically, the extension of State farms (*sovkhoz*) in the 1960s to 1980s and the reorganization of the subsistence economy accompanied a concentration of the population and intensive

[12] At that time Ainu went to the same school as Japanese (Asahi 2005: 140).

industrial development (Roon 1996: 167). It caused cultural homogeneity and the extinction of traditions, including the native languages.

As a result, Russian has now become the first language. In other words, it can be said that Russian gradually went from being one of the contact languages to the only language in 50 to 60 years.

4.4 Present situation of the Uilta speakers

The Russian and Japanese influence has been extremely advantageous because of their national power. However, the language shift has come so far that the Uilta language is now seriously endangered. Ozolinja (2002: 144–145) reported the following figures according to the estimated data available in September 2000.

- Ca. 10 persons: active speakers (who actively produce folklore; with slight knowledge of Russian)
- 16 persons: conditionally bilingual (who speak Uilta depending on the circumstances; without knowledge of folklore; with good knowledge of Russian; all aged over 50)
- 24 persons: passive speakers (who understand with the aid of communication in Russian).

There remained altogether 50 people or fewer who had some knowledge of Uilta. It is highly probable that the number has since decreased further.

Measures have since been put in place to revive Uilta and use it in education. In the 1990s a writing system for the Uilta language was devised, which paved the way for the first primer (Ikegami et al. 2008). This book is now being used to teach Uilta in Poronaisk in the south, and classes are due to begin in Val in the north (according to the data acquired in September 2009).

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, we acknowledge three stages of language contact in Sakhalin as follows. This idea is also represented as a diagram in Scheme 2 below.

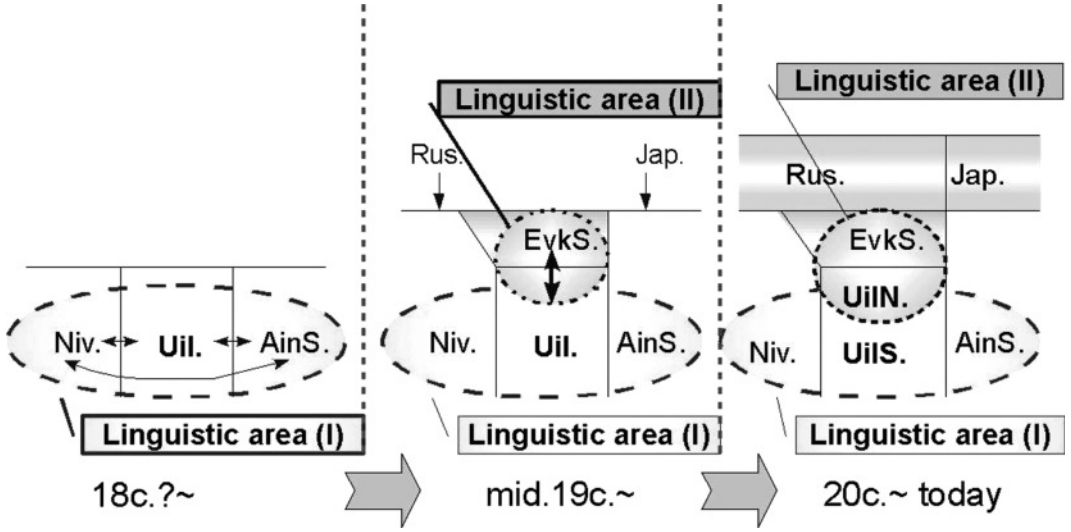
I. Firstly, since the 18th century at the latest, the Uilta, Nivkh and Ainu peoples have lived side by side and been in contact with each other. The linguistic situation among them is characterized by multilingualism on the whole. We can assume that their languages interacted and formed 'linguistic area I.' The actual situation is, however, still open for future investigation.

II. Secondly, the close contact between Uilta and Evenki began with the Evenki migration to Sakhalin in the mid 19th century. The similarity in economic engagement between the two groups and the Evenki's cultural superiority led to comparatively rapid innovations in the Uilta language, and resulted in the formation of 'linguistic area II' in northern Sakhalin. Today we can still recognize some features of this area in the dialectal differences within the Uilta language.

III. Finally, in the 20th century, the Uilta language gave way to the national ones. The

southern group of Uilta learned Japanese during the Karafuto period. After WWII, Russian was adopted as their first and only language throughout Sakhalin, and the number of Uilta speakers decreased rapidly.

Scheme 2: Linguistic 'strata' on Sakhalin



We postulate that these situations are piled one on top of the other like 'strata'. Today the national languages are in dominant use and the indigenous ones are almost indiscernible, making it increasingly difficult to observe them. There is indeed an urgent need today to describe the indigenous languages before they become extinct. Much more descriptive studies will provide us with the clues to approach and 'excavate' the history of these languages.

First of all, it is essential to describe the synchronic features of the language, paying particular attention to the dialectal difference between northern and southern Uilta. This will contribute to the development of an areal-typological study of the languages on Sakhalin and in the surrounding area. Only then will we be able to clarify any interference in Uilta from the surrounding languages, which will enable us to approach the history of the interactions among these languages or ethnic groups. In future, a study of these linguistic areas will give us helpful suggestions for ethno-historical research not only on the island of Sakhalin, but also in the surrounding area.

Abbreviations

AinS.: Sakhalin dialect of Ainu/EvkS.: Sakhalin dialect of Evenki/Jap.: Japanese (in general)/ Niv.: Nivkh (in general)/Rus.: Russian (in general)/Uil.: Uilta (in general)/UilN.: Northern dialect of Uilta/UilS.: Southern dialect of Uilta

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ウイルタをめぐるサハリンの言語接触についての予備的考察

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本稿は、サハリンの先住民族ウイルタをめぐる言語接触についての予備的考察をとおして、この地域の歴史研究における言語学的アプローチの意義と可能性を提示することを目的とするものである。

ウイルタ語は、ツングース諸語の一つとして系統的にはアムール川下流域に分布する言語に近いとされているが、少なくとも 300 年の間サハリン島北部から中部の地域で話され、系統の異なるニヴフ語やアイヌ語と接触してきた。19 世紀以降の民族誌によれば、ウイルタの北のグループとニヴフが隣接し、20 世紀初頭には両者が互いの言語を習得した。一方、ウイルタの南のグループは民族間の共通語としてアイヌ語を習得したと推測される。このように、ウイルタ・ニヴフ・アイヌとの間では、複雑な多言語社会が形成されたと見られるが、その実態と相互影響は必ずしも明らかではない。

19 世紀半ば、沿海地方からサハリン北部に少数のエヴェンキが移住した。彼らがトナカイ飼育という共通の生業を持っていたこと、および彼らの文化的な先進性を背景として、二つの民族は急速に接近した。その結果、エヴェンキ語は短期間でウイルタ語に影響を及ぼした。その影響は、今日のウイルタ語北方言についてすでに指摘されている。

20 世紀に入り、ウイルタの北のグループはソ連の、南のグループは日本の支配下に置かれた。それぞれで民族同化政策が本格化し、言語教育によって北でロシア語、南で日本語の習得が進んだ。そして戦後、両方のグループで急速にロシア化が進んだ結果、日常の使用言語をウイルタ語からロシア語に置き換える言語交替が本格化し、今日に至ってはウイルタ語を話せる人がごくわずかしか残っていない。

以上に挙げた諸言語の影響をウイルタ語のなかに見出すことにより、これらの言語ないし民族の相互関係の歴史にアプローチすることが可能となる。その際、北と南に分かれるウイルタの方言差を意識することが重要と考えられる。そのためには、今日話されるウイルタ語の特徴をできる限り記述し、近隣の言語との比較研究へと応用していくことが期待される。