

The dynamics of multilingualism in an Arctic language ecology: The Anabar District

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In this talk we analyze translocal small-scale multilingual communities in the Anabar ulus, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). We argue for bringing together what would at first seem to be two disparate theories, the concepts of small-scale multilingualism and translocality, to analyze the complex multilingual practices in the villages of Saskylakh and Yuryung-Khaya. Anabar is a multilingual and multiethnic region, home to Dolgan and Evenki peoples, living embedded in the context of Sakha (the regional majority language) and Russian (national language) usage. Data come from sociolinguistic questionnaires, unstructured interviews, and linguistic elicitation with a total of 100 respondents. At individual and local societal levels, the linguistic repertoire of speakers reflects small-scale multilingual translocality.

The Anabar District, one of the world's northernmost regions that is inhabited year-round, is relatively isolated. Yuryung-Khaya boasts the densest population of ethnic Dolgans living in the Republic; the population of Saskylakh is mixed Dolgan and Evenki. Historically, the predecessors of today's residents were highly multilingual; contact effects are found today. Consultants identify as speaking a "mixed language" or their "own" language (*на своем языке*), not Sakha but also not Dolgan. Our data show variation across speakers, on a continuum of more Dolgan-like to more Sakha-like, with variation in contact effects from Evenki and Russian. Ongoing immigration from the Taimyr okrug reinvigorates Dolgan linguistic practices and identity.

We invoke *translocality* (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013) to account for the fact that the people in these communities are at once both linked to the local place and also migratory, mobile, and connected to both one another and to people still living in the places they have left behind. People in Anabar are translocal, exhibiting strong ties between place and identity, which in turn informs how they use language, and reinforces a strong sense of ethnic identity and language ideologies.